



INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Maricopa County has experienced rapid and robust growth throughout its history. Based on economic opportunity, beneficial climate, and an active lifestyle, growth has transformed the region from an agricultural center to a vibrant commercial, industrial, and recreational hub. As the County proceeds in the twenty-first century, its citizens have the opportunity to shape the process of growth to sustain economic prosperity and enhance the quality of life. This Comprehensive Plan addresses challenges facing the county, and presents opportunities for the continuing success of the region.

County government is required by state law to prepare a comprehensive plan for the unincorporated areas “to conserve the natural resources of the county, to ensure efficient expenditure of public funds, and to promote the health, safety, convenience, and general welfare of the public” (A.R.S. 11-806). Fundamental to the role of county government in serving the different interests and areas within the county is the mission statement adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1995:

The mission of Maricopa County is to enhance, increase and enrich the individual freedom and opportunities of all Maricopa County citizens.

This mission statement is the foundation of all county efforts and provides the philosophical framework for the Comprehensive Plan.

The planning process is structured to emphasize public involvement and incorporate comments, ideas, and direction of the public into the plan. Through this effort, the citizens of Maricopa County have developed a vision statement to guide the preparation and implementation of the plan:

Our overriding vision for Maricopa County is to accommodate growth in a fashion that will preserve our sense of community and protect and enhance our quality of life. Priorities include protecting our unique desert environment, cultural heritage, and southwestern lifestyle. These unique features define our region and provide an identity that is recognizable in the international arena. Recognition and enhancement of these characteristics are critical to our future success.

The government of Maricopa County explicitly acknowledges there is an appropriate responsibility between the government and private property owners to address this mission and vision. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to respect private property rights while enhancing, increasing, and enriching the individual freedoms and opportunities of all citizens.



INTRODUCTION

Creation of this plan is authorized under Title 11, Section 806 of the Arizona Revised Statutes. The statute requires counties to prepare a comprehensive plan to guide coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development within the County. Under this section, the County Planning and Zoning Commission is directed to prepare, “a comprehensive plan of the area of jurisdiction of the County for the purpose of bringing about coordinated physical development,” and “to promote the health, safety, convenience, and general welfare of the public.” The statute requires the comprehensive plan be developed so as, “to conserve the natural resources of the county and to ensure efficient expenditure of public funds.” Upon adoption, the plan becomes the official guide for the development of the unincorporated areas of the county.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Maricopa County, located in central Arizona within the upper Sonoran Desert, encompasses 9,226 square miles. (See Figure 1–Maricopa County) The county is bisected by the Salt River, which runs from northeast to southwest. It joins the Gila River near the center of the county, continuing in a southwesterly direction towards the Colorado River, meeting it near Yuma.

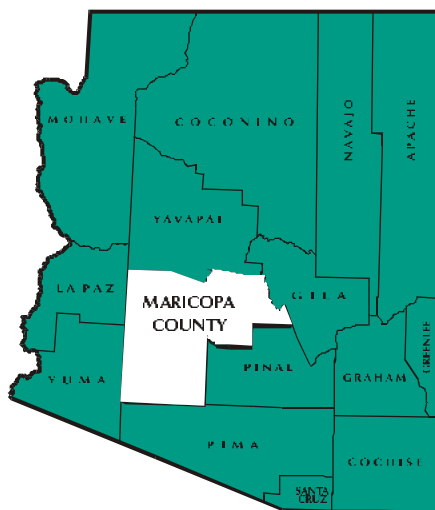


Figure 1-Maricopa County

The county is bisected by the Salt River, which runs from northeast to southwest. It joins the Gila River near the center of the county, continuing in a southwesterly direction towards the Colorado River, meeting it near Yuma. The life-sustaining water this extensive river system brings to the region has defined life in Maricopa County from the earliest Native American settlements to the present day.

Varying in elevation from 436 feet above sea level in the southwest to 7,645 feet at the northeast, the county contains several plant communities. At the lower elevations, desert scrub punctuated with saguaro cactus predominate. The higher elevations contain woodlands and forests. Along the rivers, streams, and washes, riparian communities flourish. The riparian areas sustain the majority of the diverse plant and animal life found in the county.

Maricopa County has one of the most ample water supplies of any desert region in the west. The watershed of the Salt and Verde Rivers is impounded behind the dams of the Salt River Project. The Central Arizona Project canal which brings water from the Colorado River, can supply more than a fifth of the total water for the county. In addition to this supply, the metropolitan area is situated over a prolific aquifer. To assure an adequate water supply for future generations, the state legislature adopted the Groundwater Management Act in 1980. This act requires careful water management and conservation measures to ensure water will be available for the influx of people expected in the next 20 years and beyond.



HISTORY

Maricopa County was originally inhabited by Native Americans, who abandoned the area during the 1300's for unexplained reasons. Agriculture was the prominent activity and was reestablished during the 1860's as the first European settlers migrated to the Salt River Valley. Rapid growth and robust development have been the hallmark of Maricopa County ever since. The Valley's agriculture base and population grew steadily. In 1870 the town site of Phoenix was established. On February 14, 1871, the Territorial Legislature created Maricopa County. By 1872, there were over 700 people in the county with 5,000 acres under cultivation.

The arrival of the railroad in 1877 caused a surge in economic activity. In 1900, the county population was about 20,000 (See Figure 2-Maricopa County Population). In the early 1900s, the larger farm parcels scattered throughout the region were divided into small farm communities such as Chandler, Gilbert, and Tolleson. In 1902—at the request of President Theodore Roosevelt—after a series of devastating floods, Congress passed the Reclamation Act of 1902. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation started construction on Theodore Roosevelt Dam. This marked the beginning of a modern system of irrigation works for the storage, diversion, and development of water for agriculture.

Irrigated agricultural production and population exploded after the completion of Roosevelt Dam in 1912, providing the region with a reliable water supply. Maricopa County quickly became one of the leading agricultural producing counties in the United States. During this period, the county also became a winter haven for tourists.

Growth in the area continued as tourism, automobile travel, military, and industrial activities came to the county. Construction continued on residential developments, highways, and commercial districts, making Maricopa County an increasingly popular place to live.

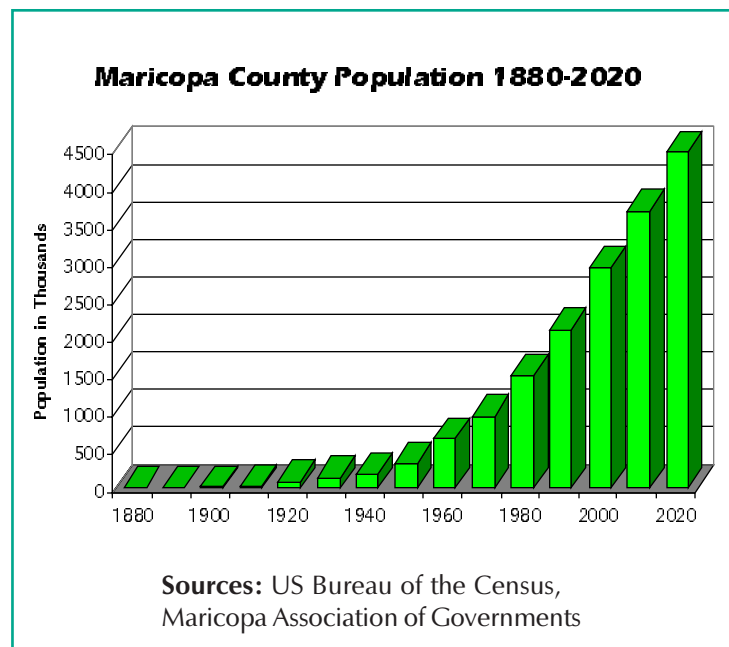


Figure 2-Maricopa County Population



INTRODUCTION

Until the end of World War II, the traditional economic powerhouses of both the State of Arizona and Maricopa County were known as the four “Cs”: cotton, copper, cattle, and citrus. The planned strategic decentralization of the nation’s industrial base during the war further established Maricopa County as a center for aluminum processing, aviation, electronics production, and a center for pilot training. These newly established industries fueled the monumental growth of the county in the post-war era.

By 1960, the population was over 660,000 people, reaching one million residents in the early 1970s. Combined with the general economic expansion of the 1980s and the rush to the Sun Belt, Maricopa County claimed over 2.2 million residents by 1990. Even with economic sluggishness in the early 1990s, the region continued to grow. The Special Census of 1995 set the county population at 2,551,765 people.

The Arizona Department of Economic Security projects Maricopa County will have 4.5 million people in 2020. These projections assume the historical conditions for growth will continue. In addition, increased trade with Mexico, South America, and the Pacific Rim is expected to provide new sources of economic growth and migration to the area.

Additional demographic and historical information is available in the *Historical Overview and Population Background Report*, published in 1996.

WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

The Comprehensive Plan encompasses the future vision of the county. It is *comprehensive* because it considers the interrelationships of planning activities over the entire unincorporated county. The Plan represents the interests of the wide range of citizens who are active participants in the planning process and the interests of future citizens. The Plan shows the interdependence of the use of land and resources in the different geographic areas, the physical infrastructure of the built environment, and the process of governing. Ultimately, because it is comprehensive, the Plan guides decision making by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors to protect natural resources, ensure efficient expenditure of public funds, and promote the health, safety, convenience, and general welfare of the public.

This Comprehensive Plan is the continuation of a long tradition of planning in Maricopa County. Planning activities in both the Planning and Development Department and the Department of Transportation have continually evaluated the pace of growth in the county and have clearly foreseen the effects of growth.

Long range, comprehensive planning has been integral to the mission of Maricopa County since the late 1950s. At that time, the Planning Department started studying regional land use and population growth, while the Transportation Department led the development of the *Major Streets and Highway Plan*. Over the years, comprehensive general plans were developed for specific unincorporated county areas and many of the incorporated cities and towns. In the 1960s, the county planning department was at



the forefront of planning in the region. When the cities' planning resources were limited, Maricopa County worked with them to develop general plans and to coordinate regional planning activities.

The vast size of Maricopa County has dictated a subregional approach to comprehensive planning in the county during the last twenty years. A series of area land use plans have been developed in a continuing program to plan for unincorporated areas. By the early 1990s, due to increasing development pressure and the realization of the need to address issues on a regional basis, the county committed to developing a comprehensive plan for the entire unincorporated area. This plan incorporates existing planning efforts into a unified vision for the future.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan is organized into five sections, as follows:

1. **Introduction:** This section provides background information concerning the history and physical features of the county. It examines the tradition of comprehensive planning and provides information on the organization and use of the plan.
2. **Comprehensive Plan Elements:** The Plan has four elements: Land Use; Transportation; Environment; and Economic Development. Each element contains goals, objectives, and policies that provide guidance for evaluating activities within the element. The key issues and strategies are explained and supported with tables and figures.
3. **Agenda for Action:** The Action Plan is the program by which the Comprehensive Plan will become a significant force for the accommodation of growth. The program contains strategies and indicators for each element, leading to the implementation of the vision.
4. **Amending the Plan:** The Comprehensive Plan is a flexible document that will adapt to changing conditions. The amendment process will facilitate the evolution of the plan.
5. **Appendixes:** This section contains a glossary of terms, an acronym list, the Citizen Participation Process, and by reference, other supporting documents. Citizen participation ensured significant citizen input, including the development of subregional visions and goals. This process also supported the alternatives analysis which resulted in the final land use and transportation plan. The supporting documents includes inventory and analysis reports, background information, and General Plans of the local jurisdictions in Maricopa County. These documents will be on permanent file in the Planning and Development Department library, and most will be available on the Comprehensive Plan Internet web page at <http://www.maricopa.gov>.



INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan provides a schematic guide for decisions concerning growth and development. While it is ultimately a tool to be used by policy makers to guide their decisions, it also serves as a reference for the private sector in making informed investment decisions. The plan is guided by the following basic principles:

- Decision-making processes should recognize and integrate both short-term and long-term land uses, transportation, environmental, and economic development considerations.
- Planning efforts should be coordinated between various levels of government.
- The most cost-effective solutions should always be considered.
- Citizen participation will remain an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan's implementation and amendment process.

Each of the Comprehensive Plan elements contains a series of goals, objectives and policies that can be used to define development standards according to the principles.

- A **goal** is a concise statement describing a condition to be achieved. It does not suggest specific actions, but describes a desired outcome.
- An **objective** is an achievable step toward the goal. Progress towards an objective can be measured and is generally time dependent.
- A **policy** is a specific statement to guide decision making. It is derived from the goals and objectives of the plan.

The goals, objectives and policies are the action component of the Plan. The remaining portion of the text is for background, information, definition of terms, and clarification of policies. Any person processing plans with the county who is required to show consistency with the Plan, needs only show consistency with the goals, objective and policies. Cases initiated prior to adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not be subject to the requirements of this Plan.

The underlying tenet of the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage urban growth in the urban areas within the planning areas of the municipalities, and reserve the balance of the county for rural uses, open space, and high-quality development master plans.

Development Master Plans (DMPs) are an important part of the development pattern in Maricopa County. DMPs encourage flexibility in the development of land and allow for adjustment to changing public and private development needs. DMPs will continue to be encouraged within any land use area for the accommodation of growth.



The plan seeks to encourage high-quality, orderly and efficient development at the right time, in the right place, and at the right cost. Development proposals should consider these three criteria:

- ***Is it in the right place?*** The plan identifies development areas. A proposal should be generally consistent with the use indicated by the land use area within which it lies.
- ***Is it at the right time?*** Services are required for all development. The nature and extent of the services will be indicated by the development area. If services are in place or can be provided, by either the public or private sector, then it is the right time to develop.
- ***Is it at the right cost?*** Do public revenues generated by the proposed development exceed the cost for county government to provide services? If the projected revenues exceed the costs, then it is the right cost to county government.

CONCLUSIONS

This Plan demonstrates Maricopa County's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all its citizens. High-quality and efficient growth, in balance with the environment and property rights, can be achieved when supported by the requisite legislation, ordinances, policies, and procedures. Implementation of the Plan can facilitate predictable and consistent treatment of growth and development proposals. The Plan is intended to respect private property rights while enhancing, increasing, and enriching the individual freedoms and opportunities of all citizens. The Plan will also serve as a catalyst for further enhancements to guide growth in cooperative, regional settings.

The development of the Comprehensive Plan has occurred during a period of transition in Maricopa County. At the beginning of the planning process, the region was struggling to recover from an economic recession. At that time, regional growth priorities focused on expansion. As the Comprehensive Planning process developed, the economy rebounded with such a sustained vigor that concerns surfaced about the effects of growth on the region's quality of life.

Present planning methods must be examined for their sustainability. New and innovative methods are needed that can preserve a high quality of life as Maricopa County welcomes nearly two million new residents over the next two decades. By being able to adapt to changing conditions, Maricopa County will face the challenge of maintaining this high quality of life, while accommodating substantial growth.

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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS



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LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

The land use element, in concert with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, establishes a planning process designed to achieve a well-integrated and efficient decision making process. This element will accommodate growth in the unincorporated county until the year 2020 by identifying goals, objectives, and policies that translate into land use designations. These will influence the pattern and timing of land development in the county, while recognizing environmental constraints and the desires of residents to have different types of living and working conditions. Uniform application of these policies and objectives should result in balanced and harmonious communities where a high quality of life can be maintained.



Land use in Maricopa County changes as it is affected by existing and new factors. This element envisions a more efficient land use pattern for the future. Reliance on the automobile and the expanding roadway network have resulted in a dispersed development pattern, which contributes to street and highway congestion and other regional deficiencies. In addition, housing and employment have not always been well integrated. The separation of housing and employment increases commuting time and distance, further affecting the quality of life in the county. Innovative patterns of growth are needed if the county is to continue to attract high-quality development and maintain its quality of life.

This plan element will create a foundation upon which future planning by the county, adjacent cities, the Indian Communities, other public agencies, and the private sector can be coordinated. While the land use element does not cross jurisdictional boundaries, it does consider land uses throughout Maricopa County to help establish a coordinated and sustainable development pattern. Maricopa County will consider the adopted land use plans of adjacent cities when developing future county land uses. As with the other elements, this section acknowledges that there are explicit rights and responsibilities of both the county and private property owners.

The land use element permits development at urban densities where urban services can be provided efficiently and discourages urban densities in areas where urban services cannot be made available. The land use element encourages the phasing of urban densities concurrent with the extension of urban services. The extension of urban services will be encouraged after coordination with the affected jurisdictions to ensure regional



consistency. Large scale development master plans are permitted if these developments are of high quality and provide necessary services.

Besides the urbanized areas, the land use element includes several development areas that will retain their existing character or be built as currently designated. Rural areas, where urban services are not currently expected to be provided, are also addressed.

Supporting data for the land use element is available in the *Land Use Element Inventory and Analysis Report*, published in 1996.

MARICOPA COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Maricopa County Planning and Development Department provides services mandated by Arizona State Statutes to help bring about coordinated physical development in accordance with the present and future needs of the county. Maricopa County has comprehensive planning and zoning authority for over 3,000 square miles of land in the county (Figure 3-County Planning Authority). These services strive to conserve the natural resources of the county, ensure efficient expenditure of public funds, and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the unincorporated areas. Services of the Planning and Development

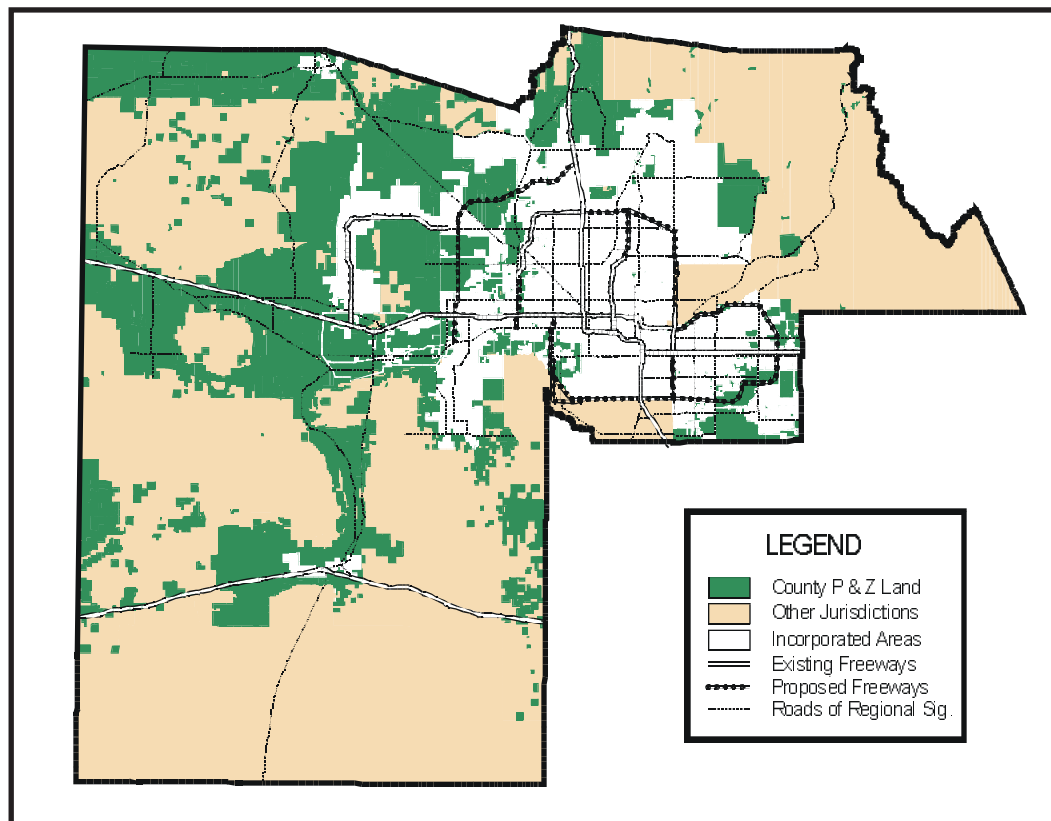


Figure 3-County Planning Authority



Department include the preparation and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and the implementation and enforcement of the Maricopa County Subdivision Regulations, Zoning Ordinance, and Building Code. Department personnel also act as staff to various boards and commissions. Additionally, the department plans, coordinates, and administrates county economic development programs.

The services provided by the department create a foundation upon which planning and development is based. The department's coordination of services provide guidance for incremental decisions made by both the public and private sector which affect the character and quality of life of the region.

LAND USE ISSUES

Through public meetings, partnering sessions, and other public participation activities, the following county-wide land use issues were identified:

- Protect the desert environment, including scenic views, native vegetation, and open space
- Maintain a visual sensitivity for the natural environment in new construction
- Establish stronger maintenance standards within existing subdivisions
- Develop additional recreational amenities
- Maintain opportunities for rural life-styles
- Buffer high density residential land uses in rural areas
- Locate commercial development proximate to roadways, with appropriate landscaping and height restrictions
- Encourage master-planned communities as an appropriate pattern of development in unincorporated areas of the county

LAND USE AREAS

Given the vast area under the jurisdiction of Maricopa County, the land use area designations in this Plan embody generalized land use, development, or preservation concepts, not specific land uses or densities. However, underlying some of these areas are more detailed plans that recommend specific land uses. The designations also vary by jurisdiction and regulatory authority (Figure 4-Land Use Designations). The land use designations of the plan are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ◆ Incorporated Areas | ◆ Dedicated Open Space |
| ◆ General Plan Development Area | ◆ Proposed Open Space |
| ◆ County Area Plans | ◆ Rural Development Area |
| ◆ Established Communities | ◆ Municipal Planning Area |
| ◆ Existing Development Master Plans | |



The process for determining the status of any given area in the county is illustrated in (Figure 5-Land Use Decision Tree). Entering the chart at "start" and following the questions in the flag shaped boxes will lead to a rectangular box containing the appropriate land use designation. Note that the Urban Service Area and future Development Master Plans do not appear as part of this determination. The Urban Service Area functions as an evolving guideline, and is determined on a case-by-case basis. The location of future Development Master Plans is discretionary; this Plan does not seek to predict their location. A full explanation of these concepts follows.

INCORPORATED AREAS

These areas are under the jurisdiction of the cities, towns, and Indian Communities. The majority of urban development in the region to 2020 will occur in these areas. While Maricopa County does not regulate land use within these areas, the Comprehensive Plan encourages new development to occur either within or in proximity to the incorporated areas.

GENERAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT AREA

The General Plan Development Area (GPDA) is unincorporated area that is likely to be annexed by a city or town in the future and is included in an adopted municipal general plan. These general plans often provide specific recommendations for proposed land uses. These areas include many of the unincorporated lands that are either surrounded completely by a jurisdiction (Class I County Island) or surrounded by a "strip annexation" (Class II County Island).¹

Under A.R.S. §11-831, "The rezoning or subdivision plat of any unincorporated area completely surrounded by a city or town shall use as a guideline the adopted general plan and standards as set forth in the subdivision and zoning ordinances of such city or town... If an affected city or town objects to any such proposed action the board or commission shall set forth in the minutes of the

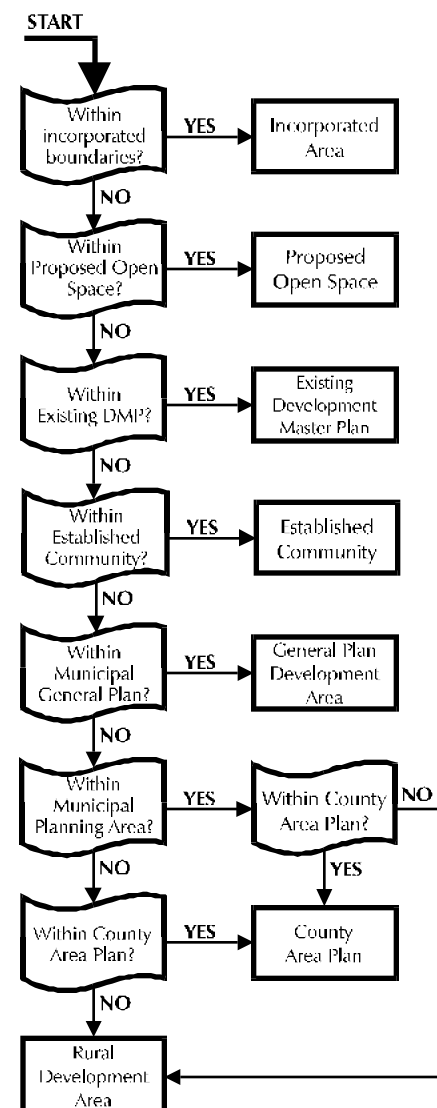


Figure 5-Land Use Decision Tree

¹ Refer to Appendix B-County Island in the *Land Use Element Inventory and Analysis Report, 1996*

For Figure 4 – Land Use Designations:
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meeting specific reasons why, in its opinion the guideline is actually being followed or why it is not practicable to follow the guideline of the general plan.”

On the basis of the above quoted statute, the county will take into consideration the general plans of the municipalities within these areas to guide decision making under the following circumstances:

1. The municipal plan has been updated in the previous five years.
2. The municipality can demonstrate that residents, property owners, and improvement districts from the unincorporated areas in the specific planning area have been involved in the planning process.

URBAN SERVICE AREA

The Urban Service Area (USA) designation exists as a guideline for decision making to encourage coordinated physical development within the urbanizing areas of the General Plan Development Area. It is based on the provision of the infrastructure necessary to establish and maintain a high quality of life. The USA is not delineated on the land use designation map, rather it is defined by the ability of a jurisdiction, improvement district, or private entity to provide infrastructure and appropriate urban services to a specific site or project.

Determination of the USA is based on the presence or feasibility of infrastructure to support urban densities and urban life. Minimal infrastructure necessary to promote the health and safety of the public includes potable water, sewer, electricity, telephone, drainage, flood control, police protection, fire protection, and transportation. Desirable urban services which promote the convenience and general welfare of the public include schools, parks, open spaces, libraries, public transportation, and government services, as appropriate.

The Urban Service Area is considered suitable for development at urban densities. It is also considered efficient to expend public funds for infrastructure within the Urban Service Area. A proposed development can be considered to be within a USA if it conforms to the relevant general plan, and utilities and infrastructure can be provided.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING AREA

The Municipal Planning Area (MPA) consists of unincorporated areas identified by the municipalities as being within their area of future interest, but are presently not included in a municipal general plan. These areas are under Maricopa County jurisdiction as long as they remain unincorporated. Most of the Municipal Planning Area is covered by existing county area land use plans. Portions of the Municipal Planning Area that are not included in any municipal general plan or an existing county area land use plan are designated as part of the Rural Development Area.



County plans will continue to guide growth and development in the Municipal Planning Area until such time as the respective municipality amends its general plan to include specific portions of the MPA. At that point, the county will take into consideration the amended plan as a guide to decision making if the municipality can demonstrate residents, property owners, and improvement districts from the unincorporated areas in the specific planning area have been involved in the process to amend the general plan.

COUNTY AREA PLANS

County Area Plans include areas, generally located outside a municipal general plan, that are contained in a county area land use plan. County area land use plans were developed and approved by the county and provide direction on land use decisions. As long as these areas remain unincorporated, they are expected to develop at rural densities unless higher densities are approved as part of a Development Master Plan. Residents in these areas have supported the land use recommendations in these plans and would generally like to see them maintained. The county will continue to recognize these plans and update them as needed to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The goals and policies set forth in the Comprehensive Plan are intended to be carried forward and be reflected in updates to the Area Plans.

Area Plans in this category are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ◆ New River Land Use Plan | ◆ Goldfield Land Use Plan |
| ◆ Grand Avenue Land Use Plan | ◆ Little Rainbow Valley Land Use Plan |
| ◆ Tonopah Land Use Plan | ◆ Westside Military Land Use Plan |
| ◆ Williams Regional Planning Study | ◆ Desert Foothills Policy and Development Guide |
| ◆ Wickenburg Highway Scenic Corridor Development Guide | ◆ White Tanks-Agua Fria Policy and Development Guide |

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLANS

Within the county are existing development master plans that are builtout, under construction, or proposed. These areas include, but are not limited to, such DMPs as:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| ◆ Belmont | ◆ Sun City | ◆ The Villages at Desert Hills |
| ◆ Dreamland Villa | ◆ Sun City West | ◆ Tonto Hills |
| ◆ Leisure World | ◆ Sun Lakes | ◆ Tonto Verde |
| ◆ Rio Verde | ◆ The Preserve | |

All existing DMPs within the county may be developed in accordance with their approved Development Master Plan. The balance of an existing Development Master Plan may be developed in substantially the same manner as the developed portions. The Comprehensive Plan will not impose new or modified development requirements



on Existing Development Master Plans. Furthermore, Existing Development Master Plans do not need to demonstrate consistency with the Plan.

ESTABLISHED COMMUNITIES

Within unincorporated areas of the county there are communities with established patterns of development and sense of community, although the exact boundaries may be difficult to delineate. The intent of the Established Communities designation is to recognize these areas and ensure their character and lifestyle are respected. These areas are characterized by existing patterns of development. These are guided and/or regulated by land use plans, community plans, improvement districts, or traditional zoning ordinances.

The established communities are located in various areas of unincorporated Maricopa County and may be characterized by the following criteria:

- Existing or approved subdivisions
- Roadway network in place or programmed (improved and/or unimproved)
- Lot split areas
- Defined land use patterns

Residents of these areas have stressed the importance of preserving the character of their communities. To achieve this, historic development patterns will continue. However, the county would consider other land use options, if they are components of a large scale, self supporting Development Master Plan.

Established Communities can be categorized in a number of ways. They can be specific communities or areas of development within an area land use plan such as:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| ◆ New River | ◆ Desert Hills | ◆ Morristown |
| ◆ Tonopah | ◆ Laveen | ◆ Palo Verde |
| ◆ Wittman | ◆ Arlington | ◆ Little Rainbow Valley |
| ◆ Chandler Heights | ◆ Mobile | ◆ Circle City |
| ◆ Wintersburg | | |

Established communities can also be existing settlements which have not been included in any previous county planning study:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|
| ◆ Agua Caliente | ◆ Cotton Center | ◆ Hopeville |
| ◆ Santa Maria | ◆ Norton's Corner | ◆ Gladden |
| ◆ Perryville | ◆ Liberty | |
| ◆ Sunflower | ◆ Harquahala Valley | |
| ◆ Hassayampa | ◆ Paloma | |
| ◆ Aguila | ◆ Sentinel | |



These settlements vary from well established villages to rural crossroads. For these areas, specific land use plans or community plans could be developed to define the character and extent of the community and guide future development.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AREA

The Rural Development Area (RDA) includes areas generally outside the General Plan Development Area of the municipalities which are not covered by an area land use plan or any other regulatory program. The RDA is designated “Rural” according to the county land use categories (See Table 4-Land Use Categories, Appendix G). These areas are typically vacant land or rural in character with minimal, if any, infrastructure or public services. Residential development will be allowed at a very low density, generally not to exceed one house per five acres, except where higher density zoning exists, or as part of a Development Master Plan. The purpose of the RDA is to preserve the opportunity for low density rural living as a lifestyle choice. Residents choosing a rural lifestyle should not expect urban services. These areas generally rely on wells and on-site septic systems, rather than municipal water and sewer systems. Further, residents in rural areas can expect longer travel times to schools, libraries, shopping, and parks.

While the primary land uses of the RDA are residential and agricultural, other compatible public and private nonresidential uses may be located within these areas. Appropriate uses could include: agricultural support services, ranching, hunting clubs, recreational areas, dude ranches, RV parks, churches, home-based businesses, and small scale cottage industries. Such development, when appropriate, would be required to meet standards for rural development.

Although the RDAs will generally develop at low density, higher densities are not precluded if requested as part of a Development Master Plan. Development Master Plans in a RDA would require measures such as buffers to mitigate the impact of the proposed master plan on the surrounding rural area.

It is possible that as the county develops, some parts of the RDA could come within the path of more urbanized development. Amendments to the RDA will be considered upon presentation of appropriate evidence and with measures to mitigate the impact of such development on the surrounding rural area.

Agriculture

Historically, agriculture has been the county’s most important industry. Presently, the county’s agricultural base is being converted to urban uses. While many residents of the county believe that agriculture is important, there is no consensus on whether to protect agriculture and agriculture-related resources. Owners of agricultural properties have the right to develop their land as they see fit, within the limitations of zoning or other applicable laws and regulations. However, for those residents who wish to continue to farm, Maricopa County could consider providing technical guidance to ensure future viability of agriculture.



Such guidance could include:

- Transferring of development rights to other areas where development may be more appropriate
- Encouraging infill development and directing high intensity development into an urban service area
- Establishing land use buffers to mitigate the impact of agriculture and agricultural resources on nonagricultural development
- Providing incentives to promote the preservation of agricultural lands, such as clustered development or community supported farms

DEDICATED OPEN SPACE

Dedicated Open Space areas are areas under public ownership—except state trust land—that have unique environmental and physical qualities. These qualities include mountains and foothills, rivers and washes, canals, significant desert vegetation, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources. Within Maricopa County, dedicated open space exists in the form of regional parks, wilderness areas, wildlife areas and the Tonto National Forest. These sources of open space, nearly 2,000 square miles, provide recreation and visual resources for the residents of Maricopa County.

The Maricopa County Regional Parks System consisting of nine parks, is considered to be the largest parks system in the country. Containing approximately 180 square miles, the majority of these parks are bordered at least to some extent, by unincorporated portions of the county, with two exceptions—San Tan Mountains Regional Park is located entirely within Pinal County and Lake Pleasant Regional Park is located partially in Yavapai County. This regional park system is utilized for a variety of activities, including: biking, camping, hiking, boating, fishing, and equestrian trails.

Wilderness areas within Maricopa County consists of nearly 500 square miles. Located primarily in the Rural Development Area, these lands are managed by the Bureau of Land Management as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Tonto National Forest, managed by the US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, provides for multiple uses and a sustained yield of goods and services that maximizes long-term net public benefits in an environmentally sound manner. The Forest is comprised of nearly 1,000 square miles in the northeastern corner of the county, of which approximately 235 square miles are managed as wilderness areas. The United States Fish & Wildlife Service manages three wildlife areas which are also classified as Dedicated Open Space.

PROPOSED OPEN SPACE

Natural resources and open spaces are important to the quality of life in the county. These areas, if acquired for the public domain, are intended to be planned and managed



to protect, maintain, and enhance their intrinsic value for recreational, aesthetic, and biological purposes. Within Proposed Open Spaces, public access should be protected and preservation encouraged. All privately-owned and state trust land considered for open space conservation may be developed unless it is added to the public domain or protected using other techniques that respect property rights.

The Proposed Open Spaces, when combined with existing Dedicated Open Spaces, provide guidance for the establishment of an interconnected system of protected natural open spaces. This system corresponds to regionally significant mountains, rivers, washes, upland desert, and cultural resources in unincorporated Maricopa County. Potential open spaces suitable to be considered for protection were identified by a county-wide working group. The group, comprised of representatives from Maricopa County's Planning and Development Department, Department of Transportation, the Flood Control District, and Recreation Services as well as various municipal, state, and federal agencies, worked with a team of consultants for over eighteen months to develop the plan. The process included mapping and analysis of information on topography, hydrology, flora and fauna, land use, ownership and demographics to determine suitability of open space. It also included a process to solicit public participation and comment consisting of newsletter mailings, public meetings, focus groups, and a planning charette. The complete findings were published as *Desert Spaces: An Open Space Plan for the Maricopa Association of Governments* in 1995. Maricopa County initiated the MAG conducted study and provided major funding for the effort.

Significant mountainous areas, major rivers and washes, upland Sonoran Desert vegetation, canals and trails, and archeological sites will be considered for potential open space. There are almost 650 square miles of Proposed Open Space in the unincorporated areas of the county. Approximately 360 square miles are publicly-owned. Privately-owned land, including State Trust land, accounts for almost 290 square miles. Two thirds of the privately owned land is either in the 100-year floodplain or located on slopes over 15%. Most of the remaining one third—about 90 square miles—is state trust land.

Mountainous areas include ridge lines, enclosed terrain, and foothills that buffer mountains. Rivers and washes include the 100-year floodplain, wildlife habitat, native vegetation along waterways, and endangered and natural riparian habitat of the region. Upland Sonoran Desert vegetation is comprised of the rich saguaro, palo verde, ocotillo, and other mixed cactus plant community and wildlife habitat found at the higher elevation of the county. Canals and trails could connect the various components of Dedicated Open Space and possible future open spaces. The historic legacy of the county is contained in sites containing evidence of historical European settlements and the Hohokam Indians.

The degree to which open space can be added to the public domain or be otherwise protected depends on the use of specific preservation techniques (actions that can be



used to acquire and protect open space) and the public commitment to financial support for such actions.

Techniques that could be utilized include:

- ◆ Fee simple purchase
- ◆ Conservation easements
- ◆ Purchase of development rights
- ◆ Purchase of right-of-way easements
- ◆ Environmentally Sensitive Land Ordinance
- ◆ Right of first refusal
- ◆ Density transfers
- ◆ Performance based zoning
- ◆ Dedication/donations
- ◆ Preservation easement
- ◆ Hillside ordinance
- ◆ Cluster development
- ◆ Conveyance of property to homeowner associations
- ◆ Arizona Preserve Initiative
- ◆ Lease/use agreements

The suitability of any of these techniques to preserve a specific parcel would be evaluated on a case by case basis. The application of preservation techniques must not infringe on the property rights of any land owner.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLANS (DMPs)

Master planned communities have long been a preferred type of residential development within Maricopa County. The Development Master Plan component of the Comprehensive Plan encourages quality standards of prudent and sustainable land use for future master planned development outside the urbanized area of the county. Development Master Plans provide opportunities for creative and innovative design and development techniques. These communities have the potential to provide mixed land use opportunities, a wide range of housing choices, open space and recreational opportunities, and an appropriate multi-modal transportation system connected to schools, parks, retail, and employment centers. Development agreements can be used to define appropriate standards and incentives, and aid in the implementation of Comprehensive Plan goals and policies in specific DMPs. Newly approved Development Master Plans in the county—including those areas covered by a new or existing area plan—become the controlling planning document and area plan for that property.

Location

Historically, DMPs have been allowed throughout the county. While future DMPs can be developed in any location in the unincorporated county, appropriate development guidelines would vary depending on the land use area as defined in the Comprehensive Plan.



Transportation

Previous development patterns rarely offered county residents alternatives to frequent, long distance trips by automobile. To mitigate this trend, new DMPs will strive to reduce the dependency on automobiles for some types of travel. Modes such as transit, golf carts, bikeways, equestrian trails, and pedestrian networks must be considered in a complete transit system. By using alternative modes of transportation, vehicle miles of travel should be significantly lower than in similar suburban developments.

Mixed land use patterns within the community will provide multi-modal access to open space, public facilities, employment, schools, and other activities, while reducing vehicle trips. To accommodate this, bicycle racks, telecommuting centers, and delivery services will be strongly encouraged.

Road design within the communities will enhance the character of the area. Development Master Plans will allow flexible standards for roadway design, transit facilities, pedestrian circulation, and bike lanes. Innovative techniques for accommodating emergency service vehicles will also be considered instead of mandatory street widths.

Residential

The density and location of residential development heavily influences the cost of housing, the type and level of services required, and the impacts on the natural environment. Residential development within DMPs will promote a variety of residential densities to address these considerations while promoting a diversity of housing choices for residents within the community. A range of housing densities will be allowed within a DMP, promoting various opportunities for social and economic success.

Higher density residential development should be located near transportation routes, commercial centers, and public facilities. The remaining residential development will be encouraged to be clustered and located near natural features or community amenities. Residential development should have direct access to open space wherever possible and should be within a short walk or bike ride to schools, commercial centers, and activity centers to encourage alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and bicycling.

Employment

The opportunity for residents to work close to their home is an important objective of the DMP component. In creating a “jobs to housing” balance, residents of the community will have a shorter commute time and distance, while having the option to use alternative modes of transportation. An economic base within the community, located in local employment centers, will result in a growing sense of community and greater quality of life. Even though retirement communities are not expected to include employment centers in their plans, service and retail employment in such communities could consider similar alternatives.



Development Master Plans should encourage small businesses within the community, including home-based businesses, as appropriate. As the community continues to grow, a major employment anchor may become established with options for telecommuting, flexible schedules, and other innovative techniques to decrease work trips.

Open Space/Buffering

The preservation of open space provides recreation, visual character, wildlife, vegetation, and a greater quality of life for the community. The Development Master Plan component of the Comprehensive Plan encourages environmentally sensitive development with innovative land use techniques to preserve potential open space. For Development Master Plans located in the Rural Development Area, an appropriate buffer at the perimeter of the development should be considered to assure compatibility with the existing rural character of the area.

Public Facilities and Services

Development Master Plans approved outside the General Plan Development Area will be required to work with appropriate agencies to provide urban services within the development. These services include police, fire, schools (except in retirement communities), water, sewer, parks, and libraries if needed and not available within a reasonable distance.

Techniques for financing infrastructure in Development Master Plans could include Improvement Districts or Community Facilities Districts. These districts provide a flexible mechanism to balance the financial burden of infrastructure financing, without increasing the purchase price of residential units. Presently in Arizona, counties may form Improvement Districts but are not authorized to use the more flexible and comprehensive tool of the Community Facilities District. The use of such districts would require the development of statutory authority in Title 11 of the Arizona Revised Statutes.

Development agreements are voluntary arrangements between county or municipal governments concerning the design and construction of development projects. These agreements protect projects from changes in laws and regulations, while allowing governments to obtain specified exactions to ensure construction of infrastructure and reinforce local planning efforts. Arizona counties have the statutory authority to enter into these agreements. Development agreements offer a method of reducing developers' risks while simultaneously increasing governments' ability to guide local development. A recent large scale Development Master Plan in northern Maricopa County utilized this technique, and it is expected that such agreements will become more common in the region.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goals, objectives, and policies evolved from existing county goals, existing goals of municipalities within Maricopa County, and lengthy discussions at public meetings, focus groups and partnering meetings. The following goals, objectives, and policies have been developed to accomplish the land use component of the Comprehensive Plan.

The goal of the land use element is to:

Promote efficient land development that is compatible with adjacent land uses, is well integrated with the transportation system, and is sensitive to the natural environment.

Within this goal, the following objectives and policies apply:

Objective L1 Promote infill development.

- Policy L1.1 Encourage Capital Improvement Program (CIP) expenditures to be directed to infrastructure development in the Urban Service Area of the General Plan Development Area.
- Policy L1.2 Explore financing mechanisms to pay the cost of capital improvements necessitated by new development.
- Policy L1.3 Encourage the creation of density bonuses and other innovative development techniques within the General Plan Development Area.
- Policy L1.4 Encourage incentives for development within the Urban Service Area.
- Policy L1.5 Explore the use of development agreements to encourage infill.
- Policy L1.6 Use the adopted general plan and standards of municipalities as a guideline for development in the General Plan Development Area contingent upon such plans having been updated or reviewed within five years and with evidence that the affected residents, property owners, and improvement districts have been involved in the process to update the general plan.

Objective L2 Provide employment opportunities proximate to housing.

- Policy L2.1 Encourage mixed use development within future planned communities. Retirement communities will not be expected to include employment generators, other than local community services.
- Policy L2.2 Encourage residential development that provides opportunities for a variety of income levels.
- Policy L2.3 Encourage incentives and public/private partnerships to act as a catalyst for provision of affordable housing.
- Policy L2.4 Encourage incentives and public/private partnerships to provide employment opportunities within Development Master Plans,



where appropriate.

Objective L3 Encourage innovative and varied approaches to development.

- Policy L3.1 Encourage high quality residential, commercial, and industrial land developments.
- Policy L3.2 Encourage flexible standards to accommodate innovative and varied approaches to development.
- Policy L3.3 Encourage the use of unit plans of developments for residential developments with more than ten dwelling units.

Objective L4 Provide for the coexistence of urban and rural land uses.

- Policy L4.1 Encourage appropriate buffers to mitigate conflicting land uses.
- Policy L4.2 Encourage adequate separation between intensive urban and rural land uses.
- Policy L4.3 Encourage development patterns and standards compatible with the continuing operation of military and civilian airports, and other major noise generating employment centers within unincorporated county areas.
- Policy L4.4 Consider lot split review.
- Policy L4.5 The county may provide for the use of business licenses in conjunction with the establishment of adult oriented facilities, including adult arcades, adult bookstores or video stores, adult live entertainment establishments, adult motion picture theaters, adult theaters, massage establishments, and nude model studios.

Objective L5 Promote master planned communities that provide a mix of housing types and land uses.

- Policy L5.1 Encourage the creation of master planned communities that provide a diversity of land uses.
- Policy L5.2 Encourage continued development within existing Development Master Plans under existing standards and administrative guidelines. Minor amendments to DMPs approved prior to adoption of the Comprehensive Plan that do not increase the density by more than 10% need not show conformity to this Plan.
- Policy L5.3 Encourage the use of nontraditional zoning and flexible development standards in new Development Master Plans.
- Policy L5.4 Encourage residential development that provides opportunities for a variety of income levels, including affordable housing.
- Policy L5.5 Encourage the use of development agreements and protected development rights.



Policy 5.6 Encourage public/private partnerships to act as catalysts for Development Master Plans that demonstrate substantial job creation.

Policy 5.7 Encourage Capital Improvement Program expenditures to share costs of regional facilities within Development Master Plans.

Objective L6 Cluster development in appropriate patterns.

Policy L6.1 Encourage and accommodate mixed use development.

Policy L6.2 Encourage a mixture of housing types and intensities within planned developments.

Policy L6.3 Encourage planned communities that incorporate quality and clustered development.

Policy L6.4 Encourage new development to preserve significant desert habitats, natural resources, and landscapes.

Objective L7 Ensure the provision of adequate public facilities.

Policy L7.1 Encourage creation of mechanisms to assess the phasing, timing and location of infrastructure in accordance with adopted land use plans.

Policy L7.2 Consider the creation of a system to evaluate the fiscal implications of development on the Maricopa County budget.

Policy L7.3 Explore the formation and use of improvement and community facilities districts.

Objective L8 Support innovative technological operations and facilities to encourage an appropriate balance of automobile use and to encourage energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources.

Policy L8.1 Encourage transit oriented development.

Policy L8.2 Encourage zoning that supports and promotes in-home business, compatible with residential development.

Policy L8.3 Encourage innovative techniques for water conservation to meet standards set by the Arizona Department of Water Resources as required in the Arizona Groundwater Code.

Policy L8.4 Encourage and support innovative technological operations and facilities.

Objective L9 Integrate transportation planning with land use.

Policy L9.1 Encourage transportation mitigation plans, or other traffic studies, to consider the relationship of land use to transportation corridors.

Policy L9.2 Encourage Capital Improvement Program expenditures to focus



infrastructure development towards Urban Service Areas in the General Plan Development Area.

Objective L10 Promote the balance of conservation and development.

- Policy L10.1 Encourage the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas through the transfer of development rights, density transfers, or other suitable techniques.
- Policy L10.2 Encourage building envelopes and localized grading, to reduce blading and cut and fill, in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Policy L10.3 Encourage and provide incentives for clustered development patterns within Development Master Plans.
- Policy L10.4 Encourage the development of critical area programs to preserve environmentally sensitive areas in a manner that protects private property rights.
- Policy L10.5 Encourage development standards for hillsides and other environmentally sensitive lands that allow street standards and other infrastructure to respond in an innovative manner to topography and drainage.
- Policy L10.6 Encourage the preservation of ridgelines, foothills, and mountainous land with slopes of 15% or greater.

Objective L11 Promote an interconnected open space system.

- Policy L11.1 Determine, encourage, and support techniques for acquisition and maintenance of open space.
- Policy L11.2 Preserve and respect private property rights in any future designation of open space areas.
- Policy L11.3 Encourage the protection of ridgelines, foothills, significant mountainous areas, wildlife habitat, native vegetation, and riparian areas.
- Policy L11.4 Discourage development within major 100-year floodplains.



TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

An appropriate transportation network for Maricopa County supports safe and efficient



movement of goods and people, is environmentally compatible with surrounding conditions, and is supportive of economic development activities. This element identifies a system that consists of a primary, secondary, and local roadway network, combined with a series of overlays, to create a county roadway network. It defines a system of transportation facilities and services that may be developed in Maricopa County through the year 2020. The scope of this element includes not only existing and future roadway networks within the county, it also highlights regional efforts towards creating a multi-modal system to accommodate future transit, pedestrian, and bicycle needs.

Maricopa County is served by an extensive transportation system of highways, major thoroughfares, buses, regional airfields, and an international airport. In addition, a growing trail and bikeway system serves pedestrian and bicycle travel. This transportation system accommodates thousands of trips daily, mostly by single occupancy vehicles. However, the construction of transportation facilities within the county has not kept pace with development over the past 30 years. Increasing congestion on freeways and major arterials, combined with insufficient mass transit, highlights the need to develop a more comprehensive roadway and transit network within Maricopa County.

Several factors contributed to the transportation system that currently exists in Maricopa County. Many of these are related to the high rate of growth within the Phoenix metropolitan area and include not only the pace and quantity of land development within the county, but also its type and characteristics. Maricopa County development patterns are generally low density, suburban growth, with limited nonresidential land use and few employment centers outside the urban core. Other socioeconomic factors, such as high automobile dependency and two worker households, contribute to an increasing demand for transportation facilities.

Along with an increased demand for transportation services in Maricopa County, further complications arise from the patchwork of jurisdictional and political boundaries that dominate the Phoenix metropolitan area. The presence of county islands within



incorporated areas, rapidly expanding municipal boundaries, and the needs of rural county residents compete to complicate planning, funding, and implementation of transportation improvements within Maricopa County.

The better integration of land use planning with transportation planning is a principal method for achieving long term improvements in the transportation system in Maricopa County. Specifically, this means finding ways to support more efficient land use patterns related to transportation. One method is to concentrate densities along major existing or planned transportation corridors. Further, since roadway improvements alone cannot provide boundless transportation capacity into the future, actions to bring about less demand for capacity are also necessary.

The transportation element provides an overview of the roadway conditions, network connections, capacities, and limitations of the existing system. Supporting data for this element is available in the *Transportation Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions*, published in 1997. The goals and objectives outlined in this element emphasize the need to maximize and efficiently use the existing and future Maricopa County transportation systems by considering alternatives to automobile travel, while better coordinating land use as it relates to transportation planning.

ISSUES FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Discussions with the public and with partnering agencies within Maricopa County have focused on several key transportation related issues. These issues have been synthesized from public meetings, partnering sessions, and other public participation opportunities. These issues can be summarized as (not in priority order):

- ◆ Air quality
- ◆ Congestion
- ◆ Fuel (and other) taxes
- ◆ Incomplete freeway system
- ◆ Insufficient public transit
- ◆ Low density urban sprawl/inefficient roadway network
- ◆ Transportation funding sources

It is important to note that, like the other elements in this Comprehensive Plan, transportation issues do not stand alone. Numerous interrelated issues discussed in the public meetings cross element lines. These issues include annexations and the lingering effect of county islands, the location of future commercial development, low density unplanned sprawl, unplanned drainage and water management, growth management, alternatives for infrastructure financing, and compatibility with municipal plans. Each of these issues has an impact on transportation—and the transportation network will



influence these issues. Through careful linkages, each of these issues will be addressed within this document. Strategies and policies have been developed that, once implemented, should begin to mitigate the existing negative relationships between these issues.

EXISTING SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Maricopa County is often criticized for being too reliant on the automobile. Cars dominate the lifestyle of most county residents. Plans for Maricopa County dating back over 30 years show a road network that is not too different from the one that has been constructed, or planned, today.

Maricopa County has 2,107 miles of rural roads and 722 miles of urban roads. To accommodate and plan for new roadway construction, it is helpful to organize them into a classification system. Many roadway classification systems are based upon purpose or function. Function is generally divided into two competing purposes: mobility and access. Mobility is based upon the volume of traffic moving at the greatest unimpeded speed along a given thoroughfare. Access is provided by accommodating low-speed and low-volume roadways with intersections and driveways. In Maricopa County, roads are classified as rural or urban roadways, and further classified according to the function they serve. These functions range from providing access to adjacent land uses to providing mobility with little or no access, based on their existing functional classification.

FREEWAYS

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is responsible for freeway maintenance and construction within Arizona. The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is the regional agency responsible for planning freeways for the Phoenix metropolitan area. The MAG Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) calls for an 84% increase in freeway lane miles over the next 20 years. This consists of 76 new freeway centerline miles, increased high-occupancy vehicle lanes, and major investment studies to complete freeway corridor analyses.

ROADS AND STREETS

The road network is the nucleus of the transportation system in Maricopa County. Automobiles, buses, trucks, and bicycles all strive for space on the network. Pedestrians compete for time to cross the street. While expansion of the network generally means accommodating additional automobiles, some reallocation of space and priorities is becoming necessary to encourage alternatives.

This Plan recommends that available resources be used to fund projects and programs that sustain mobility, access, safety, the environment, and economic development within and around Maricopa County. Further, preservation, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and improvement of existing roads are also recommended.



All roadways in Maricopa County have current and future functional classifications. The current classification is in accordance with the MCDOT Roadway Design Manual, Chapter Five, Geometric Design Standards, adopted on November 3, 1993. A roadway's future classification is also based on the MCDOT Roadway Design Manual and other factors. These factors typically include future traffic volumes, land use compatibility, county Comprehensive Plan recommendations, and local transportation circulation elements.

Functional classification is a long range planning tool that helps link land use with transportation. Functional classification further allows for the preservation of right-of-way in the future as properties are developed.

Arterials

Roads in the network are classified as rural principal arterials, rural minor arterials, urban principal arterials, or urban minor arterials. Depending on the connections and the character of the adjacent land use, the patterns of use vary along the arterials. Arterials typically have four to six lanes and average traffic volumes of 6,000-45,000 vehicles per day. In general, arterials are designed and managed for through, or regional, travel.

The characteristics of the arterial network make these roads particularly suited to regional commuting. Parking is often restricted on these routes and would remain so for future planning considerations. Further, arterial roads that act as regional connectors may be candidates for widening, possible speed limit increases, or other capacity increases. They may also be suitable for additional transit opportunities such as busways, bike lanes, or carpool/vanpool lanes.

Collector Roads

Collector roads are divided into rural major and minor collectors, and urban collectors. As with the arterial system, usage varies depending on the location of the road and the nearby land uses. Collector roads are designed as two lane roads with average traffic volumes of 500-18,000 vehicles per day. Traffic movement along collector roads serves intra-community travel and routes of higher classifications.

Since collector roads are less critical to regional commuting, they may be suitable candidates for traffic calming, parking, pedestrians, and bicycle lanes. Speeds and road standards should be kept consistent with the character of the neighborhood or area, and road widths should be determined based on compatibility with the terrain, particularly in hillside areas.

Local Roads

Rural local roads and urban local roads (also known as residential roads) differ primarily by design characteristics and land use. Both are designed to serve primarily local traffic, have only two lanes, and have average traffic volumes of less than 1,000 vehicles per day.



PUBLIC TRANSIT

A continuing regional effort has been looking for better ways to encourage development patterns that reduce the need for automobile travel through alternative modes and shortened trips. At the most comprehensive level, reduced auto usage may result in improved air quality, agricultural and open space preservation through a more compact urban form, and help build a sense of community. Further, transit can be more effective when it is a viable alternative to congested roadways, high parking costs, and limited parking availability. Transit should not only serve the transit-dependent rider, but the general public.

In addition, an important part of regional transit is the development of transit stations that can become activity centers by:

- Encouraging economic development by creating and attracting businesses near transit stations
- Improving air quality by reducing the number and length of automobile trips. (If bicycling and walking are also encouraged, air quality can be further improved)
- Providing a choice of housing options by encouraging mixed-use development of varying densities

Growth in any area is desirable and is the by-product of an effective, healthy, and aggressive economy. As Maricopa County grows, an efficient multi-modal system will require development patterns that advance alternatives to automobile travel for work and non-work trips. This is particularly true as jobs are dispersed throughout the county and regional densities approach the scale of the central metropolitan area. To meet this challenge, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) reinforced the necessity for regional planning efforts aimed at creating a better union of transportation and land use planning.

Bus

In order to expand the roadways available for bus transit, the county's arterial network should be suited for the highest degree of public transit use. One option to enhance bus service is the development of a bus network that places emphasis on community circulators to provide more cost-effective bus service to suburban areas using smaller, neighborhood-friendly vehicles. Other options would be to extend the hours of daily bus service, add Sunday service throughout the metropolitan area, implement new routes and trips, use alternative fuel vehicles, and expand passenger bench and shelter programs.

Rail

Rail systems under consideration in Maricopa County include light rail, heavy rail, and commuter rail. Commuter rail consists of short-haul rail passenger service operated



within metropolitan and suburban areas. Light rail is generally the least expensive because it involves lighter vehicles and structures, more design flexibility, more frequent stops, and lower operating costs. Most newer rail systems in the United States are light rail systems. Heavy rail is more expensive, but usually covers a larger geographic area than light rail systems. Heavy rail is an electric powered rail transit system that operates on a completely grade separated right-of-way. It is generally characterized by wide station spacing (1 to 2 miles apart), high average operating speeds, and greater capacity than light rail. In general, both light rail and heavy rail use dedicated tracks.

Growth in Maricopa County has followed a dispersed pattern, relying on automobiles for most travel. Lack of density, combined with concern for the cost of a new or improved transit system, are often seen as hindrances to transit expansion. However, to encourage the use of rail transit, the alternative modes must have sufficient capacity and be safe, convenient, and attractive. In Maricopa County, this would mean investing in new systems. Since a variety of technologies are available, decisions must be made as to the most appropriate system for the metropolitan area.

The challenge for rail systems continues to be to find a way to address the specific benefits of such a system, while justifying its cost. The county supports further study of the creation of rail service and is willing to be a stakeholder in the study process.

ALTERNATIVE MODES AND TELECOMMUTING

Alternative modes of transportation must play an increasingly larger role in the transportation system of the future. Key to the transportation goal is the notion of “integrated” and “multi-modal” transportation systems. This holds true for alternative systems, particularly when planning for a balanced circulation system through efficient placement of employment and services, and encouragement of bicycling, walking, and transit as alternatives. It will be important, however, to continue extensive publicity campaigns and public involvement programs to move toward modes of travel other than single occupancy vehicles.

Pedestrian

Provisions for pedestrians are encouraged in this Comprehensive Plan. With adequate facilities and appropriate urban design, walking can be used as a mode of travel for school, convenience shopping, recreation, social, and even work trips. Pedestrian facilities can be accommodated as enhancements with new roadway construction or maintenance. However, urban design issues allowing short walk trips must be addressed before significant walk trips will occur. For example, subdivisions designed as “enclaves” and homogeneous land uses are often not favorable to pedestrian activities.

In 1993, a MAG Pedestrian Plan described policies to bolster walking activities, and indicated areas where these approaches might best be implemented.



Bicycles

A regional bicycle plan was developed in 1991 and incorporated into the MAG Long Range Transportation Plan in July, 1992. The plan is currently being updated.

The plan identifies interconnected routes for bicycle travel within and through the region. Included in this system are on-street bike lanes and signed bicycle routes. Also included is an off-street multiple use path system that generally follows existing canals and riverbanks in the urbanized area and the Central Arizona Project canal to the north and east. The major policy goals of the bicycle plan are:

- Provide for bicyclists in transportation programs and projects.
- Improve safety by educating bicyclists and motorists to share the road.
- Promote awareness of the benefits of bicycle transportation to engineers and planning professionals engaged in the development of transportation projects.
- Support enforcement of applicable traffic laws to improve traffic safety and enhance courtesy among roadway users. Promote strict prosecution of traffic infractions to increase respect for riding privileges.
- Promote bicycling as a viable means of transportation and as a healthful form of recreation.

Bicycle projects are funded under various ISTEA programs administered by ADOT and MAG. Many jurisdictions are implementing local bicycle facilities. New roadway construction should include bicycle facilities to increase opportunities for those who choose to bicycle.

Intermodalism

Efforts should be made to provide points of interaction and efficient transfer among the various modes of transportation. This concept has broad implications and a wide scope of possibilities including station area development, mixed-use development, or multi-modal centers for transfer of goods. Intermodal efforts include continuing the “Bike on Bus” program, and redevelopment and adaptive reuse along existing transportation routes.

Telecommuting

With the arrival of new technology and socioeconomic changes, telecommuting is becoming a viable option for many employers and employees. Telecommuting allows employees to connect to a central office with a personal computer and modem or fax machine. Some workers may telecommute full time, while others only part time. The transportation advantages of telecommuting are trip reduction, reduced single occupancy vehicle usage, and reduced roadway congestion. These types of programs also have the potential to contribute to improved air quality.



Research indicates that 30-40% of workers have jobs that would allow telecommuting at least one day per week. To promote this, the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA) has developed a series of workshops, training sessions, and public relations campaigns to educate employers and employees.

MISCELLANEOUS

Rural Public Transit Services

Providing public transit service for residents in rural communities is vital to their mobility and quality of life. Public transportation can be provided through general public transit service, program related service, and privately operated service. Residents in unincorporated Maricopa County have limited transit services available. Transit in rural areas is currently limited to programs related to human services trips and privately operated service. Program related services only provide trips for the elderly, disabled, and low income riders. Services operate like a traditional dial-a-ride program and do not provide assistance to everyone who may need it.

To understand the needs of the unincorporated residents, Maricopa County conducted a rural transit study in 1997. Findings indicate a significant shortfall between available services and existing needs. The study also suggested that most peer counties take a more active role in providing public transportation for their residents. This plan identifies existing demand for rural public transportation and a strategy to implement needed services. The plan's findings are consistent with the goals and objectives outlined in this document. The findings from the study will also be included in the Transportation System Plan.

Park-and-Ride Facilities

Park-and-ride facilities are an important component to the success of carpool programs and increased bus ridership. Maricopa County has contributed to the development of regional park-and-ride facilities and will continue involvement where it supports trip reduction. There are several large stand alone park-and-ride facilities throughout Maricopa County and many smaller facilities incorporated into existing parking lots. The county supports the development of carpool facilities that are part of the regional park-and-ride lot network. Today, there are over 60 such facilities in the metropolitan area with over 2,500 parking spaces available. Continued growth will propel the need for more of these facilities, especially where they can support the growing public transportation network.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) is a program of a broad range of diverse technologies. Authorized under ISTEA, projects developed through the ITS program enhance transportation needs in the areas of safety, congestion management, traveler information, and incident identification. ITS can collect and transmit information on



traffic conditions, alert travelers to hazards and delays, reroute traffic around delays, automatically collect tolls, automate dispatching, improve productivity through tracking systems, and provide route guidance. In Arizona, the application of ITS technologies has been a standard for the past 15 years. Communications and long standing partnerships among federal, state, county, metropolitan planning organizations, and municipalities throughout the state have culminated in an integrated, interoperable transportation system. Applications of ITS are only limited by the imagination. At present, numerous projects are ongoing in various aspects of the transportation industry.

Maricopa County is a partner with the FHWA, ADOT, MAG, RPTA, local governments, and private industry to promote more efficient use of transportation through advanced technology and communication. National and local standards for “Intelligent Transportation Infrastructure” to support ITS are being developed. These standards, when adopted, will be incorporated into county policies and procedures for design and development review.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

Long Range Transportation Plan

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has prepared a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that addresses all modes of transportation through 2015. An update of the plan was completed in 1996. The LRTP covers airports, roads (including freeways and streets), pedestrian and bicycle systems, and transit. The county Transportation System Plan will be developed in close coordination with the MAG LRTP, particularly in those areas where the goals are similar. This will include close coordination with land use planning, the preservation of existing transportation facilities, congestion management, efficient financial programming, and region-wide connectivity.

Transportation Management Systems

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) resulted in a new standard for productive, environmentally sound, and safe transportation systems. By providing a framework for new and expanded opportunities to improve surface transportation, ISTEA changed the way transportation planning is conducted in the United States. Over a six year period, ISTEA allocated more than \$155 billion in funding for projects throughout the United States. This is 75% more than previous legislation.

Local governments are given significant roles in planning and decision-making under this legislation. ISTEA requires state and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to develop and apply various management systems. Management systems provide information to optimize the transportation system, leading to project selection and funding. MCDOT will develop and implement the following systems (Table 1- Transportation Management Systems):²

**For Figure 6 – Transportation System Plan:
Please see file transmap.pdf**

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Table 1-Transportation Management Systems		
Management System	Lead Agency	Operational Status
Congestion Management System	MAG	Fully Operational
Intermodal Management System	MAG	Fully Operational
Pavement Management System	ADOT	Partially operational
Safety Management System	ADOT	Under development
Bridge Management System	ADOT	Largely operational
Public Transportation Management System	RPTA	Under development

Roads of Regional Significance

The Roads of Regional Significance (RRS) concept was developed to have a system of roadways, secondary to the freeway system, that would carry more than half of the vehicle miles of travel within the region. Routes comprising the RRS design concept incorporate principal arterial streets consisting of a three to six mile grid of roadways constructed to a high level of design. The RRS was adopted as an advisory concept by the MAG Regional Council in the Spring of 1990.

Roads of Regional Significance consist of “Gateway” and “Urban” routes:

- Gateway RRS are portions of existing state routes that render system continuity and expedite travel entering and leaving the region.
- Urban RRS are existing streets spaced three to six miles apart, which provide for regional system continuity and have the capacity to be improved to high design standards.

MARICOPA COUNTY

Maricopa County is responsible for short-, medium-, and long-range transportation planning within the county-owned and maintained roadway network. This section summarizes some of these larger efforts.

Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is designed to fulfill MCDOT’s mission to provide a quality transportation system at the right time at the right cost. County transportation planners and engineers develop the five-year plan from the combined recommendations of county residents, their elected representatives, the municipalities, and MCDOT staff.

MCDOT reviews the combined recommendations and applies a scoring and ranking process to all project requests, evaluating such considerations as traffic volume, safety,

² For information on ISTEAs, refer to *Transportation Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions*, 1997.



problem conditions, environmental impact, economic impact, and costs. The projects are prioritized and presented to the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) for further review.

Many factors contribute to the programming process. As the CIP develops, MCDOT looks for ways to best apply county resources. Federal aid, legislative mandates, and environmental and archaeological considerations are all part of the prioritization process.

Transportation Systems Plan

The transportation element is a key component of the Comprehensive Plan. The land use and transportation impacts expected as a part of the implementation of this Plan are considered in the Transportation Systems Plan (TSP). The TSP evaluates the regional impacts of the transportation system and defines a comprehensive county transportation system with supporting plans, policies, and programs. The TSP should be considered the principal implementation component of the transportation element. It focuses on MCDOT issues, particularly customer service, the impact of technology, and regional issues.

The Transportation System Plan organizes roadways under MCDOT's jurisdiction. It helps identify priorities for funding and maintenance, and provides a mechanism to effectively invest the department's resources. The TSP system is designed to be a flexible, proactive tool for system planning and capital programming beyond the five-year CIP horizon.

The TSP defines a roadway system organized into primary, secondary, and local roads. It also includes bridges and a series of overlays³ (See Figure 6-Transportation System Plan). In order to categorize county roadways, those serving regional interests and required for roadway system performance were identified.

Primary roadways are significant routes for regional travel. The county will give high priority to improving primary roadways under its jurisdiction. The county also recognizes opportunities inherent in partnering with other jurisdictions for primary roadway improvements.

Secondary roadways serve primarily subregional travel. Improvements to secondary county roadways will be programmed based in part on their proximity to neighboring or surrounding jurisdictions and availability of other urban services.

Local county roadways serve nearby development and as collectors for primary and secondary roadways. In general, the county will only program major improvements to local roadways where there is a special need or unless there is extensive participation⁴ from the surrounding community.

³ Overlays include: scenic, recreational, emergency management, intelligent transportation systems, bicycle, and transit.

⁴ Assessment from within improvement districts is the most common form of participation.



Table 2 summarizes the relationship between the transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan and the TSP, and highlights the system funding priorities by land use category (See Table 2-Transportation System Plan Funding Priorities).

Table 2-Transportation System Plan Funding Priorities				
Area:	System:	Primary	Secondary	Local
Urban Service Area		H	M	L
Rural Development Area		H	L	L
Established Community/Existing DMP's		H	L	L
General Plan Development Area		M	L	L
Incorporated		L	N	N
New Development Master Plan		M	DR	DR

When considering investment potential, MCDOT will participate in “(H)igh” priority projects for planning, design, and construction. Under this scenario, the availability of partnering opportunities is an advantage, but not a requirement. MCDOT will also fully participate in “(M)edium” priority projects, but partners will be required. Finally, MCDOT will only participate in the planning and design of “(L)ow” priority projects, and partners will be required. Further, MCDOT will “(N)ot” participate in secondary or local road projects in incorporated areas, and will require a project developer (DR) to assume all responsibility for non-primary road projects within Development Master Plans. MCDOT recognizes its responsibility to operate and maintain all publicly accessible roadways built to MCDOT roadway standards located in its jurisdiction. MCDOT will also consider partnering efforts with developers to provide additional resources to accommodate future increases in regional travel on primary roads. The developer’s responsibility is to provide funding for roadway projects in proportion to traffic generated by the development.

Major Streets and Routes Plan

A Major Streets and Routes Plan (MSRP) will be proposed and implemented upon completion of the TSP. The MSRP is expected to define and map specific development requirements as they apply to primary and secondary roadways. The proposed plan will be supported by other county ordinances that apply to zoning and development review, as well as other right-of-way requirements where no roadways currently exist.

The MSRP is expected to specify right-of-way setback and overlay definitions to be applied on current and future routes. It will provide a legal basis for reasonable and consistent limitations on development near county roadways.



Small Area Transportation Studies

Four regional transportation studies have been completed or are underway in Maricopa County. These studies will be implemented as a part of this comprehensive planning process and the TSP:

- The **Northeast Valley Area Transportation Study** produced a transportation plan encompassing the New River and Desert Hills communities. The transportation plan contains a five-year program, a ten-year action plan, and a long-range transportation plan for the study area. The Board of Supervisors adopted this study on November 6, 1996.
- MCDOT, in cooperation with the communities of Avondale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park, Buckeye, and Tolleson, initiated the **Southwest Valley Transportation Study** in the Fall of 1995. The study involves development of evaluation methodologies and standards, an inventory of existing conditions, formulation of transportation goals and policies, and traffic forecasting based on current socioeconomic data and MAG regional travel models. A sensitivity analysis regarding a more aggressive growth scenario for the Town of Buckeye and vicinity was also performed.
- The **Williams Area Transportation Plan** was prepared by the Williams Gateway Airport Authority and Maricopa County in conjunction with consultants and representatives of local jurisdictions, state organizations, and regional planning and transportation authorities. A major growth node within the study area is the former Williams Air Force Base property. Redevelopment plans for the property include a reliever airport, an aerospace center, and an extension of Arizona State University's (ASU) campus. The center also plans to accommodate general aviation, cargo, commercial passenger service, and aerospace manufacturing, maintenance and modification.
- The **Northwest Area Transportation Plan** will be completed in 1998.

Transportation-related recommendations from the area land use plans will also be included in the Transportation System Plan.

Life Cycle Analysis

As they currently exist or are planned, each of the roadway and management systems operate as stand-alone systems. For example, the Pavement Management System does not take into consideration safety issues from the Safety Management System, and the Intermodal Management System will not be affected by maintenance costs arising from the Bridge Management System. Moreover, the county-wide effects of the small area

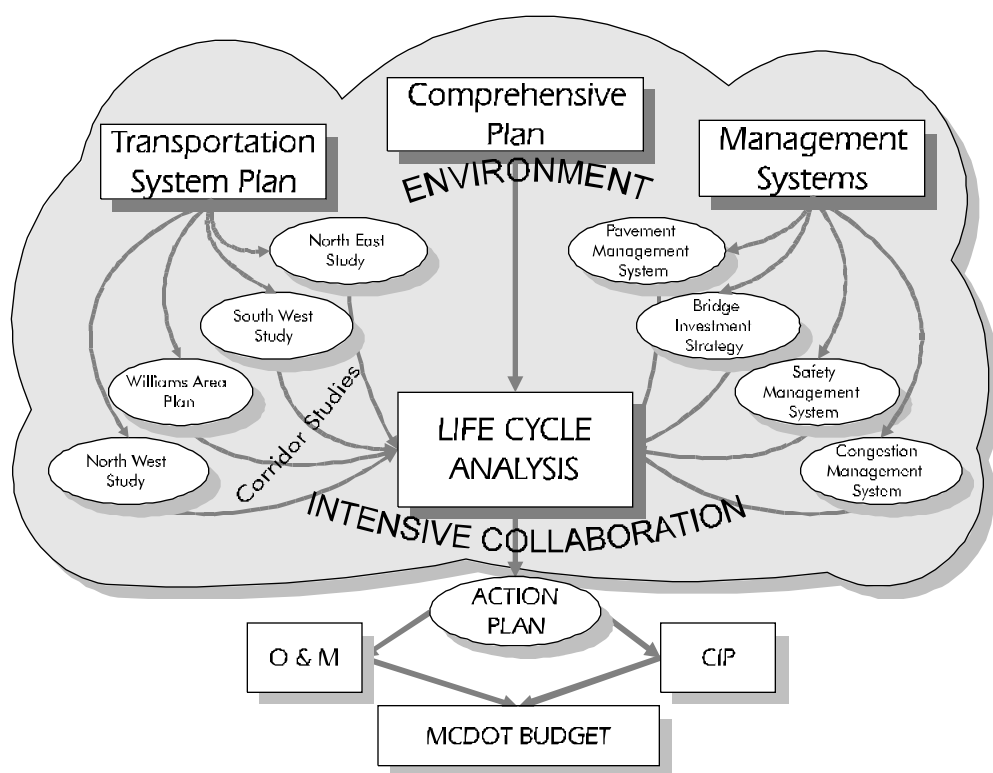


Figure 7-Life Cycle Analysis

transportation studies must also be examined. If a study recommends improvements within one region of the County, transportation systems in other areas may also be affected.

Life cycle analysis (Figure 7-Life Cycle Analysis) seeks to study the analysis derived from the various roadway and management systems, the County Comprehensive Plan, and the regional transportation studies, and evaluate the long-term decisions rendered by each. This analysis usually takes the form of a fiscal evaluation, but is not limited to this.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Economic evaluation provides a cost/benefit structure to determine the worthiness of a given project. Economic analysis compares similar things, such as the alternatives of a particular project. It may also be performed to compare dissimilar options, such as increased transit service, in contrast with building additional roadways. Ultimately, proper economic analysis ensures that a project will result in effective and efficient use of public money while meeting the transportation needs of the public. Economic analyses are generally a required part of project inception, design, and construction, and provide decision makers with the basis to make informed and sometimes difficult choices.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

The goal of the transportation element of the Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan is a declaration of anticipated and ideal results based on a combination of community endeavors and professional opinion. The goals address relevant transportation inputs into the regional growth and development process within the county. The intent is that the transportation improvements and alternative mode development process will contribute to an improved quality of life for the residents of Maricopa County.

The goal of the transportation element is to:

Provide an efficient, cost-effective, integrated, accessible, environmentally sensitive, and safe county-wide multi-modal system that addresses existing and future roadway networks, as well as promotes transit, bikeways, and pedestrian travel.

Within this goal, the following objectives and policies apply:

Objective T1 Reduce the proportion of trips made in single occupancy vehicles.

- Policy T1.1 Encourage transit oriented development.
- Policy T1.2 Explore and encourage options to increase bikeways.
- Policy T1.3 Explore and encourage options to increase pedestrian facilities.
- Policy T1.4 Explore and encourage telecommuting and teleconferencing options.
- Policy T1.5 Encourage the development of market incentives for transit and vehicle reduction opportunities.
- Policy T1.6 Explore congestion pricing options during peak travel hours.
- Policy T1.7 Explore and encourage options to expand the trip reduction program.

Objective T2 Increase transit ridership.

- Policy T2.1 Support the 100% subsidy of Maricopa County employee transit use.
- Policy T2.2 Support and encourage increased funding for transit.

Objective T3 Employ applicable technology to improve the use of transportation facilities.

- Policy T3.1 Continue financial support for Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). This should include, but not be limited to:
 - Global Positioning System (GPS)
 - Traffic Operations Centers (TOCs)
 - Closed Circuit TV
 - Kiosks
 - Internet
 - Messageboards
- Policy T3.2 Encourage future roadway development to use technological innovations to accommodate future communication technologies.
- Policy T3.3 Continue efforts to coordinate regional signal synchronization and coordination.



- Policy T3.4 Encourage the development of alternative fuels recharge stations.
- Policy T3.5 Encourage and participate in the expansion of the Traffic Management Systems (TMS) to the arterial system.
- Policy T3.6 Encourage the development of an incident management response system.
- Policy T3.7 Develop public/private partnerships to encourage technological advances.

Objective T4 Identify and accommodate transportation corridors.

- Policy T4.1 Model new corridors.
- Policy T4.2 Monitor development and subdivision proposals.
- Policy T4.3 Develop the Major Streets and Routes Plan.
- Policy T4.4 Develop and implement a Congestion Management System.
- Policy T4.5 Identify future activity centers.
- Policy T4.6 Identify current and future recreation centers and corridors.

Objective T5 Optimize public investments.

- Policy T5.1 Promote and encourage inter-jurisdictional partnerships.
- Policy T5.2 Resolve county island/strip annexation issues using existing plans and legislative opportunities.
- Policy T5.3 Utilize the functional classification system or MSRP to ensure sufficient right-of-way for future roadway needs.
- Policy T5.4 Utilize incentives to promote developer participation.
- Policy T5.5 Develop and implement Bridge Investment and Pavement Management Systems.
- Policy T5.6 Encourage multi-modal alternatives in all investment proposals.
- Policy T5.7 Apply cost effectiveness guidelines for public investments in order to gauge intangible costs (i.e. air pollution).
- Policy T5.8 Explore the development of an equitable user fee structure.
- Policy T5.9 Evaluate benefit/cost ratios on all public roadway projects.
- Policy T5.10 Enter into partnering agreements to provide additional resources to allow future increases in regional travel on primary roads.

Objective T6 Minimize travel times.

- Policy T6.1 Identify future regional by-pass routes.
- Policy T6.2 Maintain level of service C or better for all roadways and intersections.
- Policy T6.3 Reduce unwarranted signals.



Objective T7 Reduce crashes.

Policy T7.1 Develop and implement a Safety Management System.

Objective T8 Minimize and mitigate impacts of construction and operation.

Policy T8.1 Increase and standardize field monitoring.

Policy T8.2 Publish and promote traffic control requirements.

Policy T8.3 Reduce length of lane and total road closures per project.

To implement these goals, objectives, and policies, Maricopa County can invest in its transportation system in any combination allowed by state statutes. These investments are prioritized along the following guidelines:

1. Develop a seamless transportation system
2. Maintain the existing system
3. Serve the needs of existing and future development in unincorporated Maricopa County
4. Serve regional travel
5. Direct future growth to the Urban Service Areas and DMPs⁵

These management philosophies are guided by the MCDOT's Strategic Plan through its vision, mission, and values statements. The MCDOT vision is:

We set a standard of excellence regionally enabling us to consistently deliver on our commitment to provide the right transportation system for Maricopa County, at the right time and the right cost.

These management guidelines are further guided by five core assumptions:

- Maricopa County seeks to plan, establish, and construct a seamless regional system of county highways that serve as a regional travel network for all county residents, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.
- Maricopa County seeks to integrate the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation System Plan with its Transportation Investment Strategy. The county seeks to establish a clear, rational transportation policy in these documents, and implementation through a transportation programming system.
- Maricopa County seeks to support economic development, protect and enhance the environment and communities within the county, and develop insightful policy direction and clear transportation spending priorities.

⁵ Refer to the land use element for descriptions of the land use categories.



- Maricopa County seeks to establish funding priorities in the area of regional county highways, arterial and collector roads, and the local county street network.
- Maricopa County seeks to end the practice of municipal annexations that do not include the roadways that serve adjacent developments and confuse the transportation investment role of cities and the county alike.

ENVIRONMENTAL

INTRODUCTION



NATURAL SETTING

As the fourteenth largest county in the United States in terms of land area, Maricopa County's size and environmental diversity is greater than many states. The county's ecosystems and land ownership patterns provide a complex natural setting and planning agenda. Located in central Arizona within the Upper Sonoran Desert, Maricopa County, varying in topography and climatic conditions, is much more than desert. Numerous mountain ranges crisscross the county, many within national forests and other federal land.

Seven different vegetative communities occur in Maricopa County. Vegetation is predominantly characterized by desert scrub

plant communities except in the extreme north and northeastern portions of the county where elevations exceed 4,000 feet. There is also one small area of non-desert vegetation in the Harquahala Mountains in northwestern Maricopa County. A multi-layered understory of desert shrubs, cactus flora, and small-leafed desert trees such as mesquite, palo verde and ironwood occupy the desert floor. At slightly higher elevations, desert grasslands cover undulating terrain; in the mountainous areas ponderosa pine and evergreen oaks are the common cover. Wildlife throughout the county is abundant and diverse, with species of rabbit, javelina, mountain lion, deer, and an occasional bear. Many species of snakes, reptiles, and birds frequent all parts of the county.

Much of the vegetation and wildlife of Maricopa County depends on a reliable water supply. The Salt, Verde, and Gila Rivers and their tributaries account for much of this supply. The riparian habitats and ecosystems associated with these waters require special consideration by development, grazing, and recreation interests.

Protecting wildlife species and their habitats throughout Maricopa County is indicative of environmentally responsible planning in Arizona. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of creating, improving, and conserving natural habitat and open space in order to increase biological diversity.

While growth has been constant, the natural environment will always be affected by human activity. Within Maricopa County, cities, towns, and other agencies are



undertaking efforts to mitigate increases in growth-related environmental problems. A variety of policies, ordinances, and regulations have been implemented at various levels of government throughout the county in an attempt to mitigate the adverse effects of growth, industry, and development on the environment.

The Maricopa County Comprehensive Plan focuses on maintaining and improving the physical environment, thereby making the community more functional, beautiful, healthy, interesting, and efficient. Natural resource conservation and other environmental considerations are incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan to benefit and enhance the future quality of life for Maricopa County residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

As part of the comprehensive planning process, environmental information was collected and presented in the *Environmental Inventory and Analysis*, published in 1997. This report includes information and analysis of environmental conditions, regulations, policies, and programs in Maricopa County. Components of this inventory are air quality, surface water, groundwater, flora and fauna, geology, cultural resources, and parks and open space. Each component describes significant issues: existing conditions and current status of resources; federal and state legislation pertaining to the component; and any programs or regulations for which a particular agency is responsible. In addition to the information provided in the *Environmental Inventory And Analysis*, a database was compiled in a geographic information system (GIS) for the components listed above. This database includes environmental inventory maps related to the components. The report also identified primary issues and concerns, development constraints, and opportunities for each of the components.

ISSUES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Comprehensive Plan includes short-term and long-term approaches to address environmental concerns. This approach recognizes that today's actions are likely to influence the ecosystems necessary to support our future environment. A planning area may have several different ecosystems related to each other in some aspects and distinctly separate in others. Individual ecosystems in or near a planning area should be identified and recognized as important and vital to a healthy and sustainable environment. Maricopa County recognizes the importance of reducing the negative impact of human activity on our ecosystems; it realizes the value of natural ecosystems in maintaining a high quality of life for our residents.

The environmental element for the Comprehensive Plan summarizes existing conditions within the natural environment. The element identifies objectives that will ensure protection for the county's air, water, land, and cultural resources. Implementation of strategies that address these objectives is key to maintaining a high quality of life as



growth and development occur between now and the year 2020. In this section, the following definitions apply:

- **Air Resources:** attainment of a level of air quality that will bring Maricopa County into compliance with federal standards and development of measures to reduce noise pollution
- **Water Resources:** rivers, streams, lakes, floodplains, and wetlands/ riparian areas
- **Land Resources:** vegetation, wildlife, habitat, contaminated soils, topography, geology, and areas reserved for recreation, open space, and scenic quality
- **Cultural Resources:** archaeological resources, historical sites, and architecturally significant places

The following section briefly discusses each of the environmental element components and outlines specific constraints and opportunities as they relate to the environmental goals. Many of the constraints and opportunities will be identified within more than one component since some of the components have related issues.

AIR QUALITY

Air quality is one of Maricopa County's most controversial issues. Significant increases in population and vehicles on the road, development patterns, land forms, and atmospheric conditions make air pollution a serious health and environmental hazard. The area of highest population density is located in the central part of the county in a region that traps airborne pollutants and limits their distribution into the atmosphere. In the winter months, this problem is exacerbated when heavier, cold air settles over the valley and traps the warmer, polluted air below. This condition can last for several days until winds develop and disperse the "brown cloud."

Effective land use planning is critical to improved future air quality. New development should be planned so that it does not unreasonably contribute to violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Consideration for regional air quality must also be integrated into the planning for industrial and residential development, utilities, highways, waste disposal sites, and other uses. With Maricopa County taking the lead, all local jurisdictions will need to coordinate efforts to ensure acceptable air quality for county residents.

NOISE

Growth and development result in the generation of activities that create noise. In recent years, ambient noise emanating from a variety of sources such as highway traffic, airplanes, construction, and industrial and commercial activities has become an increasing concern both to the public and to local, state, and federal agencies. The ambient noise levels in the county have been increasing over the years, resulting in incremental



diminishing of “peace and quiet.” Minimizing noise impacts can be realized with the implementation of noise abatement criteria.

Noise abatement in Maricopa County will need to occur on three fronts:

- Point source noise from major developments
- Area source noise from individual land uses in zoning districts
- Line source noise from vehicular traffic

The Comprehensive Plan proposes to protect, preserve, and promote the health, safety, and welfare of Maricopa County’s citizens through the reduction, control, and prevention of noise. This can be accomplished by establishing guidelines that will eliminate and reduce unnecessary and excessive traffic and other noise.

WATER RESOURCES

Water resources represent environmental and/or physical constraints to development as well as provide a necessary resource for continued growth. Since Maricopa County is located in an arid part of the state, water is a precious commodity. Surface water and groundwater are equally important suppliers for the region. Surface water flows are regulated by large upstream dams. Other surface water conveyances in Maricopa County include the Central Arizona Project (CAP) aqueduct and a system of irrigation canals that divert water from the river channels for agricultural use.

Groundwater, which is drawn from a series of large aquifers below the earth’s surface, is also used to meet agricultural, municipal, and industrial needs. In some areas of the county, use of groundwater exceeds the rate of natural and incidental recharge and depths to groundwater have increased due to this overdraft. Because state law governs the use of groundwater and the circumstances under which it may be used for new development, Maricopa County does not intend to impose independent requirements concerning water sources and usage.

Water quality for surface water and groundwater is monitored by various federal, state, and local government agencies. Several different sources of pollution can adversely affect the quality of water, including urban run-off, combined sewer overflows, on-lot wastewater disposal, agricultural run-off and various municipal and industrial point and non-point discharges. Since these pollution sources are regional in nature, they are regulated under a variety of programs administered by the state and federal governments. Maricopa County does not intend to impose independent requirements concerning water quality.

VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

A diversity of plant and wildlife species plays an important role in the quality of the environment. The key to maintaining this diversity is to preserve the land that supports



wildlife habitats. The impacts of development and other human activities on wildlife and their associated ecosystems can be significant. Complex ecosystems support life as numerous interrelated organic and inorganic components are continuously recycled. An activity that disrupts part of this system invariably has a secondary effect on the rest of the system. As Maricopa County grows, sensible planning that promotes the preservation and conservation of significant vegetation and wildlife species is important.

The protection and conservation of the county's valuable natural resources is everyone's responsibility. Maricopa County has accepted stewardship in managing these resources to assure a healthy environment. This intergovernmental responsibility requires coordination and cooperation with all jurisdictions in the county.

An objective of open space acquisition is to preserve wildlife habitat in urbanizing areas by conservation of significant wildlife habitat areas and corridors. These wildlife corridors can also function as paths for pedestrians, equestrians, and bicyclists to link open spaces. Avoiding or reducing adverse impacts to the natural environment is an important goal identified in this Comprehensive Plan.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources reflect our prehistoric, historic, and traditional heritage. Maricopa County was home to prehistoric people for thousands of years up until about 1400 AD. Late archaic peoples hunted in the region and may have settled in what is now Maricopa County. The Hohokam were the first to permanently settle in the Salt River Valley. Discoveries of sites occupied by these people are still being made today, although much has been destroyed by the progress of civilization. Evidence of the Hohokam civilization constitutes the most significant archaeological resources in the region.

Maricopa County recognizes the importance of cultural resources as emphasized in the *Desert Spaces Plan*. In October, 1995, the MAG Regional Council adopted the *Desert Spaces Plan* as a commitment to the conservation and preservation of natural and cultural resources. An inventory of cultural resources was completed and includes:

- Properties and districts in Maricopa County that are on the National Register of Historic Places
- National Historic Landmarks in Maricopa County
- Administrative units that are defined by their cultural resources
- Areas within Maricopa County that have been the subject of cultural resources overviews or of large-scale surveys

This Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the rich historic legacy inherent to the region and supports the policies and recommendations presented in the *Desert Spaces Plan*. Cultural resources are extremely valuable for scientific, historic, and environmental research as educational opportunities and as attractions to the tourist industry.



PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Geologically, Maricopa County is in the Sonoran Desert section of the Basin and Range Physiographic Province of the southwestern United States. This province is characterized by steep, discontinuous subparallel mountain ranges separated by broad alluvial-filled valleys or basins. The development of the Salt and Gila River drainage ways and erosion of the mountain blocks resulted in the topographic features of today.

Conservation and management of natural resources and open spaces is critical to the quality of life in the county. The Comprehensive Plan seeks to establish a network of protected open spaces that correspond to regionally significant mountains, rivers, washes, and upland deserts. Specific policies for mountainous areas include protection of ridge lines, enclosed terrain, and foothills that buffer mountains. River and wash policies include discouraging development within 100-year floodplains, maximizing wildlife habitat and native vegetation along waterways, and management principles to protect the natural riparian habitat of the region.

Parks and recreation facilities are a form of secured open space that provide the foundation for a coordinated outdoor recreation system and contribute to the county's quality of life. Existing publicly-owned recreation areas include neighborhood and community parks, Maricopa County regional parks—Maricopa County administers the largest county parks system in the country—federally managed multiple-use and wilderness areas, State Game and Fish lands, and municipal mountain preserves. These lands provide recreational opportunities within or near urbanized areas. However, the rapid expansion of the urban area has resulted in increasing demand for these amenities. The Comprehensive Plan recommends acquisition of open space to meet the passive and active recreation needs of the region's population.

Complementing open spaces and parks are visual resources. Scenic corridors and vistas offer county residents the opportunity to view the natural environment without man-made intrusions. Major rivers and washes thread through the region providing uninterrupted views of mountains, vegetation, and wildlife native to the county. Major roads traverse picturesque landscapes, offering motorists scenic vistas as they travel.

Protecting open space provides regional environmental, economic, social, educational, and recreational benefits. Some of these benefits are more quantifiable than others, but they all have an influence on the lives of present and future generations.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The generation, handling, disposal, and cleanup of hazardous waste is one of this country's primary environmental challenges. Improper disposal and management of hazardous wastes, hazardous substances, and toxic chemicals have created substantial problems for government agencies in the planning, design, and construction of new developments and facilities. These wastes consist of chemical products, biological products, fuels, petroleum products, explosives, acids, fertilizers, pesticides, radioactive materials, and various industrial wastes.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Two environmental goals have been established through the comprehensive planning process for Maricopa County that specifically address the natural and human environment:

Goal 1: Promote development that considers adverse environmental impacts on the natural and cultural environment, preserves highly valued open space, and remediates areas contaminated with hazardous materials.

Goal 2: Improve air quality and reduce noise impacts.

With these goals the following objectives and policies apply:

GOAL ONE

Objective E1 Encourage preservation of significant mountainous areas with slopes over 15% for parks, open space, and/or compatible recreation use.

Policy E1.1 Conduct site evaluations in the planning stage.

Policy E1.2 Explore incentives and options for preservation.

Policy E1.3 Refine existing topographic classification system.

Objective E2 Promote development that is compatible with the visual character and quality of the site.

Policy E2.1 Encourage guidelines for building construction, modification, and landscaping that reflect community or regional character.

Policy E2.2 Encourage preservation of scenic corridors and vistas.

Objective E3 Promote the appreciation and preservation of significant archeological and historic resources within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

Policy E3.1 Conduct surveys and evaluations for cultural resources as required by the Arizona Antiquities Act, the State Historic Preservation Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other applicable laws, regulations and guidelines.

Policy E3.2 Implement mitigation measures for cultural resources as required by the Arizona Antiquities Act, the State Historic Preservation Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other applicable laws, regulations and guidelines.

Policy E3.3 Consider alternative funding sources for impact avoidance or mitigation of impacts to significant cultural resources.

**Objective E4 Encourage the protection of habitat within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.**

- Policy E4.1 Identify priority habitat areas subject to development in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and other applicable laws, regulations and guidelines.
- Policy E4.2 Participate in the inventory and classification of habitat for noted important species in priority areas if required by state or federal laws, regulations and/or guidelines.
- Policy E4.3 Develop habitat conservation plans for protected species if required by state or federal laws, regulations and/or guidelines.
- Policy E4.4 Explore incentives to preserve habitat.
- Policy E4.5 Explore methods to acquire lands classified as priority habitat areas as part of an open space plan.

Objective E5 Promote the protection and preservation of riparian areas within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

- Policy E5.1 Encourage site evaluation and classification of riparian areas as required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit program or by other state or federal laws, regulations and/or guidelines.
- Policy E5.2 Consider incentives and options for preservation.

Objective E6 Encourage the reduction of pollutants in rivers and streams within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

- Policy E6.1 Cooperate with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality bi-annual Water Quality Assessment Report in accordance with the Clean Water Act.
- Policy E6.2 Apply the National Pollutant Discharges Elimination System (NPDES) Urban Stormwater Control Program as required by the Clean Water Act.

Objective E7 Discourage new development in major 100-year floodplains.

- Policy E7.1 Ensure that local floodplain management regulations remain in conformance with state flood control statutes and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Rules and Guidelines.
- Policy E7.2 Review proposed floodplain uses and issue only appropriate permits and clearances.
- Policy E7.3 Review existing 100-year floodplains as necessary against changed conditions and obtain revisions through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) where necessary.
- Policy E7.4 Encourage flood identification studies in areas where development is imminent or ongoing to identify 100-year flood hazard areas.
- Policy E7.5 Continue public education efforts pertaining to the judicious uses of flood-prone properties.



Objective E8 Encourage protection and enhancement of future water and groundwater supplies within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

- Policy E8.1 Encourage development in accordance with state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines that govern water quality.
- Policy E8.2 Encourage groundwater recharge alternatives for water disposal for new industrial facilities.
- Policy E8.3 Follow water conservation guidelines as set by the Arizona Department of Water Resources.
- Policy E8.4 Encourage development which complies with the Arizona Aquifer Protection Permit program.
- Policy E8.5 Encourage agricultural uses of fertilizers and pesticides that reduce risk of groundwater contamination.
- Policy E8.6 Encourage the reuse of reclaimed effluent and treated industrial wastewater.

Objective E9 Encourage the cleanup and development of brownfield sites within unincorporated Maricopa County within the framework of state and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines.

GOAL TWO

Objective 2E1 Support efforts by the Maricopa County Department of Environmental Services to reduce emissions sufficiently to reach and maintain National Ambient Air Quality Standards by 1999 in county non-attainment areas.

- Policy 2E1.1 Encourage the reduction of unpaved roads within the PM₁₀ non-attainment area.
- Policy 2E1.2 Encourage the reduction of unpaved shoulders within the PM₁₀ non-attainment area.
- Policy 2E1.3 Encourage the replacement of (non-emergency) vehicles with clean burning fuel vehicles.
- Policy 2E1.4 Provide clean fuels refueling facilities at county vehicle fueling stations.
- Policy 2E1.5 Encourage the reduction of unpaved commercial parking in the non-attainment area and encourage all commercial parking in non-attainment area to be paved.
- Policy 2E1.6 Encourage appropriate transit facilities in new residential development.
- Policy 2E1.7 Within the constraints of existing development and site topography, encourage developments to have through mile and ½ mile streets to allow alternate mode facilities, where appropriate.



Policy 2E1.8 Encourage all construction activities to use the best available control measures, as required by Environmental Services, to control emissions.

Policy 2E1.9 Encourage all new construction to use clean burning fireplaces, if fireplaces are installed.

Objective 2E2 Minimize vehicle traffic noise on sensitive land uses.

Policy 2E2.1 Develop performance standards for noise for property fronting arterials.

Policy 2E2.2 Encourage the consideration of noise impacts in site planning.

Policy 2E2.3 Enforce muffler requirements.

Objective 2E3 Promote reduction of existing noise problem areas.

Policy 2E3.1 Encourage technological innovation to reduce roadway noise.

Policy 2E3.2 Consider additional mitigation measures, including bypass routes, for severe problem areas.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION



A sound economy is important to the livelihood and well-being of Maricopa County residents and communities. Defining a vision for economic and community development requires a thorough assessment of the region's economic potential, needs, opportunities, and constraints.

Most economic indicators show the region will continue to benefit from business expansions and relocation, tourism, retail trade, services, construction, and value-added agriculture. County residents have expressed an interest in an economic climate that can expand business opportunities in the face of new challenges. Therefore, the region must expand its economy on the basis of available resources, ensuring that development is balanced with the surrounding

environment. Under this scenario, communities will become well established or revitalized, with jobs and housing opportunities in balance, while the need to travel long distances for jobs, goods, services and recreation is diminished.

The vitality of communities in Maricopa County is enhanced through active participation of residents in community planning, marketing, and development. Citizen groups that originally participated in the Comprehensive Plan may become strong advocates, participate in its execution, and scrutinize its results.

The overall business climate in the region should be enhanced through: state, county, and local actions and initiatives; tax and business incentives policies; the availability of capital; and the deployment of infrastructure and services. To enhance the county's economic development opportunities, the region should be supplied with affordable housing and community facilities. In this manner, neighborhoods and central business districts will be revitalized, while labor training and quality educational programs and facilities become accessible to residents. This should become a draw for new residents and economic enterprises alike.

Maricopa County has the power to intervene as a catalyst or facilitator for quality development in the region. Thoughtful land use decisions, comprehensive transportation planning, and sensitive environmental controls, combined with economic development opportunities, should aid in the generation of quality jobs and contribute to the enhancement of the quality of life for residents and communities.



Additional background information is available in the *Economic Development Element Background and Analysis Report 1995–2020*, published in 1996.

ISSUES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic and physical transformation of Maricopa County will occur as a result of a myriad of physical, political, and socioeconomic factors that will influence the form and direction of growth and development through the year 2020. Forces outside of the county will also contribute to future growth and development, generating impacts within the internal economy and development patterns.

To be beneficial, economic development must not only help create wealth, it must also generate community benefits. Future development must help transform Maricopa County into a better place to live and work. This section describes programs and “economic clusters” that were identified for future growth and enhancement.

CLUSTER BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Governor’s Strategic Partnership for Economic Development (GSPED) will be the vehicle for implementation of policy pertaining to growth and development within the state. These policies are embodied in the State of Arizona’s Strategic Plan for Economic Development (ASPED). Ten economic clusters were identified for GSPED action in the ASPED: bioindustry; environmental technology; food fiber and natural products; high-tech industry; minerals and mining; optics; tourism and experience; transportation and distribution; software; and retirement communities. Of these, the following are the most promising for strengthening and expanding the economy of the county:

Environmental Technology

Businesses that create and provide products and services that utilize technology to (a) monitor, eliminate, control, treat, and prevent pollution; and (b) conserve and restore natural resources.

Food, Fiber and Natural Products

Growth, processing, and distribution of plant and animal products including edible crops, wine, cotton, livestock, processed foods, and forestry products.

Minerals and Mining

Development, processing, and supply of mineral resources and energy.

Tourism

Recreational and visitor facilities and services built around Arizona’s natural beauty. This includes: cultural, historical, and natural attractions; amusement parks; eating/drinking establishments; lodging and resort facilities; film production; entertainment services; sports and recreational attractions; and traveler and transportation services.



Transportation and Distribution

Physical infrastructure, capital goods, and services needed to carry passengers and deliver tangible products locally and regionally via air, rail, road, and pipeline.

Certain industry groups stand out within each of these clusters in the county, offering the most potential for expanding and strengthening its economy.

Retirement Communities

Direct and indirect impacts from retirement communities include construction, employment, retail expenditures, bank deposits and other revenue generated by the retirement sector. This also includes impacts generated in the service and recreation sectors.

Business and Recreation Services

Within this group, the golf industry appears to offer the most promise for value-added products and services. The golf industry is strongly established in retirement communities such as Sun City, Sun City West, and Sun Lakes. Spin-offs from this industry emerge in the design and engineering of golf courses and ancillary facilities: turf production and maintenance; golf course construction; production of golf equipment; clothing; souvenirs; uniforms; restaurants; catering; travel services; and others.

Manufacturing

Maricopa County offers the potential to become a prime candidate for the location of a select group of manufacturing firms. In particular, this includes those looking for freestanding sites in rural areas, proximity to large population centers, and the availability of key infrastructure and labor supply.

Manufacturers of home components and/or manufactured housing which appeal to rural or retirement living could be attracted. The rural nature of much of the county may attract industries that might be best suited away from populated areas.

Agriculture

Agribusiness development opportunities could be systematically examined and encouraged through GSPED and the Agribusiness Council of Arizona. Agriculture is a principal contributor to the region's economy and a major land user. Limited water supply, global competition, urban encroachment, and changes in federal subsidy policies will force agriculture to be more diversified in the region.

The expansion of value-added economic activity could become possible in food processing, in particular, canning and freezing, vegetable dehydration, value-added cotton, greenhouses, ornamentals, turf grass, ethanol, and others. The potential transformation of farms into commercial enterprises and dude ranch



facilities could be examined as a means of promoting and attracting tourism. Living in an agricultural environment may appeal to many. Opportunities for spin-offs in the aquaculture industry should also be examined, as this sector appears to have substantial unrealized potential in the region. The opportunities the protection of agriculture could provide for income and revenue, small town preservation, and open space in the region should be examined.

The lack of capital, planning, marketing, and managerial experience are barriers that will need to be addressed to build on existing agricultural resources. Traditional farming practices may have to yield to the realities of water and land availability, quality limitations, and cost.

Mining

This industry will require further assessment to ascertain its potential. The exploitation of gravel and sand for construction is the most important mining activity within the county. At present, no coordinated efforts exist to evaluate this potential.

Tourism and Recreation

Maricopa County's natural and artificial attributes offer opportunities for further development of tourism and recreation. For example, abundant scenic resources may provide the impetus for attracting and expanding the film industry. As with mining, no coordinated effort to promoting the industry exists at present.

The GSPED could be the instrument to assist the county plan and promote opportunities around its tourism and recreation resource base. The State of Arizona's Office of Tourism and the Phoenix and Valley of the Sun Convention and Visitors Bureau, along with federal, state and county recreation agencies may also contribute to the development of tourism and recreation opportunities in the planning area.

Transportation and Distribution

Along with manufacturing, the planning area could position itself to attract and accommodate transport, warehousing, and distribution facilities. These facilities are fundamental for expanding the region's economy. As with manufacturing, these need to be located along major transportation routes and in the vicinity of production centers.

Other industry groups with value-added potential in the region include services for the large permanent and visiting retirement population, including planned residential development, health maintenance, recreation, commercial, and hospitality services. The growth and expansion of identified industry groups may be inhibited by the lack of coordinated local planning and sector promotion capacity, infrastructure, and specialized labor.



The region will need to work to improve its basic economic infrastructure and to expand its capacity to tap business development inducements identified in the *Economic Development Background and Analysis Report*. Other inhibiting factors include the lack of coordination in planning, promotion, and marketing of the county's assets and opportunities to economic enterprises.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Economic development in Maricopa County will thrive when accompanied by stronger, better organized communities supplied with infrastructure, services, and amenities. Communities of the future will be judged in terms of their capabilities to provide for the economic needs of their citizens. This includes the capacity to supply goods and services that contribute to the health, safety, convenience, and general welfare of the public. Maricopa County can become a catalyst in the provision of these facilities, with public policy directed at strengthening and shaping communities and their environment. Communities in the region may become more cooperative, rather than competitive, working together to promote development and shape the quality of life sought by individual residents.

The vision for community development will necessitate a definition of policy to address community issues. These limiting issues include: lack of organized community representation; limited planning; a limited tax base; and limited financial and infrastructure resources. The dispersed geographic pattern of many communities in the region makes it difficult to address needs in a cost effective manner. This suggests a policy of overall resource decentralization with concentration in areas with greatest community and economic impact potential.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

The county has abundant land supplied with a regional infrastructure for new development. Maricopa County benefits from the vast array of incentives offered through the state to expand its business base. However, communities in the planning area lack the organizational capacity to effectively tap those resources.

The county will follow the greater Phoenix metropolitan area in economic development opportunities. It is envisioned that Maricopa County will play a greater role in regional and community planning. In this capacity, the county will act as a catalyst to promote job creation through new business development, attraction, expansion, and retention. Due to its rural character, the unincorporated areas are not expected to attract industry that relies heavily on specialized labor, research centers, or universities. The employment base will likely remain tied to the basic resources of agriculture, tourism, recreation, construction, retail, services for retirement communities, and limited manufacturing, warehousing, trucking, and distribution.



REGIONALISM

The agricultural and retirement industries maintain regional organizations to support and advance their interests. Other regional organizations are tied to the educational school system, water irrigation districts, and public utilities. In addition, MAG provides planning and research services to the region.

Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require extensive consultation and cooperation with municipalities, state, and federal agencies. It will also require close cooperation with other organizations to accomplish the goals, objectives and policies of the Plan.

THE ROLE OF MARICOPA COUNTY

Maricopa County may have a role in economic development through a number of means including:

- Financial support through regional economic development agencies and the county Office of Economic Development.
- Promotion of tourism through the Arizona Department of Tourism and the Phoenix and Valley of the Sun Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- Promotion of professional sports through the Maricopa County Sports Authority and the Stadium District.
- Direct financing of industrial, residential and health facilities through the issuance of bonds through the Industrial Development Authority of the County of Maricopa.
- Road improvements through ADOT and MCDOT.
- Facilitation of plan approvals by means of a One Stop Shop established in the Planning and Development Department.
- Flood control projects through the Flood Control District of Maricopa County.
- The construction of facilities utilizing resources of the Community Development Department, the Library District, and the Parks and Recreation Department.

Maricopa County may also assist with labor recruitment, screening, testing, and training for established enterprises through the Maricopa County Private Industry Council (PIC) JTPA Program. In addition, the county may promote the attraction and expansion of job-creating enterprises through the Western Maricopa Enterprise Zone, and facilitate the procurement of grants from federal, state, and corporate sources.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

Goals, objectives, and policies reflect the direction that will be taken by the Maricopa County government in shaping economic growth and development in the planning region. These are designed in consideration of the vision outlined in this plan element within each of the designated strategic planning areas of the Comprehensive Plan, up to the year 2020. The goal of the economic development element is to:

Promote a growing, balanced, efficient, and diversified economy, consistent with available resources, that enhances quality employment opportunities, improves quality of life, and is sensitive to the natural and cultural environment.

Objective ED1 Expand quality employment opportunities and capital investment.

- Policy ED1.1 Encourage the county to direct resources to promote business attraction, retention and expansion.
- Policy ED1.2 Encourage the completion of an Economic Development Implementation Plan.
- Policy ED1.3 Encourage, coordinate, and support the promotion of employment in growth clusters, mainly value-added farming, retirement, tourism, manufacturing/distribution, and service sectors.
- Policy ED1.4 Encourage the development of infrastructure, industrial parks, access roads, sewer, and water systems and the designation of employment centers in appropriate locations.
- Policy ED1.5 Encourage and coordinate the formation of a “one stop” center for economic development.
- Policy ED1.6 Encourage the brokerage of services to facilitate small business development.
- Policy ED1.7 Encourage and secure the reauthorization of the Western Maricopa Enterprise Zone (WMEZ).
- Policy ED1.8 Foster the formation of local nonprofit organizations to promote community and economic development in the region.

Objective ED2 Encourage employment opportunities proximate to housing.

- Policy ED2.1 Encourage bonus provisions to reward development that improves the jobs/housing balance.
- Policy ED2.2 Encourage the establishment of a “one stop” center for planning, zoning, and building permits to ensure prompt plan approvals.
- Policy ED2.3 Encourage and facilitate research of alternatives for new communities, making the product of research available to the private sector.



Policy ED2.4 Encourage the sponsorship of events to showcase advances in the development of communities and transportation solutions.

Objective ED3 Foster community revitalization and development.

Policy ED3.1 Encourage neighborhoods and commercial revitalization initiatives.

Objective ED4 Enhance opportunities for education and labor training in the region.

Policy ED4.1 Support state initiatives to establish “one stop” career centers.

Policy ED4.2 Encourage the maintenance of a databank with services through the Job Training Partnership Act.